

# Rowhill School

**Address:** Main Road, Longfield, Longfield, Kent, DA3 7PW

**Unique reference number (URN):** 119045

## Inspection report: 13 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ●
Needs attention	● ● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Expected standard

### Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders' inclusive vision underpins their work with pupils. They identify pupils' needs quickly, reviewing any emerging issues. They have high expectations for all pupils. Staff use pupils' education, health and care plans when planning the curriculum to ensure it is appropriate. Leaders have ensured staff receive suitable training on how to make adaptations to the curriculum and teaching that will help pupils learn successfully. Largely, the support pupils receive reduces barriers to learning. Pupils in the school's alternative curriculum provision are helped effectively to re-engage with school and learn successfully.

Pastoral support is a strength of the school's inclusive provision. A wide range of interventions are available for all pupils. The school has increased the capacity of the therapeutic team to provide this support. The impact of these interventions is regularly reviewed so that it can be measured, and appropriate adjustments made.

There is a strategy in place for spending additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant. Leaders have started the process of measuring the impact, but this is not yet explicitly linked to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work well with families, professionals and external agencies. They ensure that any alternative provision the school uses is suitable and safe. Leaders' decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

### Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school works positively to promote pupils' personal development and welfare. There is a well-designed and age-appropriate personal, social and health education programme that is available for all pupils. This programme generally builds pupils' knowledge and makes a positive difference to their development. For example, pupils know how to stay safe and healthy, online and offline. They learn about cultural and religious differences. Pupils celebrate diversity and show tolerance and respect.

There are a wide range of enrichment activities on offer. Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests through carefully selected activities, such as 'challenger troop', forest school, art, music and horse care. This offer enhances pupils' understanding of their local community and the wider world. Leaders track pupils' participation in the range of activities to ensure wider opportunities are available for all pupils.

Leaders carefully consider the educational visits and experiences that are available to ensure they are suitable for the context of the school and its pupils. These include visits to local places of worship and residential trips, as well as raising money for charities.

The school has developed opportunities for pupils to be leaders, for example, through the school council and becoming peer mentors. This supports them to develop social skills and work cooperatively. Pupils talk about their roles proudly. They are keen to make a positive impact through their decision-making.

There are a wide range of pastoral support available. The school's 3 therapy dogs have a clear and positive impact on pupils' wellbeing over time. Leaders engage with external

agencies, if needed, making timely referrals when required. They monitor the impact of pastoral support, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils, including those on part-time programmes of study.

Leaders ensure pupils have access to appropriate careers advice and training. Pupils are well informed about their next steps in education, employment and training.

---

## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

A significant minority of pupils do not make as much progress as they could, due to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. For example, there are mixed approaches to the way that pupils are taught phonics and reading. As a result, some pupils do not progress as well as they could through the curriculum. Where teachers in primary classes are following the school's chosen phonics scheme closely, it is having a positive impact.

Currently, the overall quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is too variable. This hampers pupils' writing fluency and affects the quality of their written work in all subjects.

The school has secured improvements in pupils' learning in some subjects. In these subjects, pupils enjoy sharing what they know and remember. Leaders have ambition around all pupils engaging with national tests. Most pupils achieve a range of qualifications before they leave. This supports them to move on to appropriate post-16 provision.

### Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' behaviour is not managed consistently across the school. Leaders have high expectations but their work in this area is not yet fully understood and applied by all staff. In lessons, pupils generally behave well. When not in class, however, pupils are too often not supported well enough to re-engage with their learning. Generally, staff have positive relationships with pupils. Pupils trust adults to deal effectively with any concerns, including bullying, unkindness or discriminatory behaviour. Leaders track behaviour incidents. However, they are not using this information as well as they could to tailor approaches to support all pupils. Suspensions are used appropriately to manage the most serious incidents.

Leaders take every opportunity to celebrate and promote the importance of regular attendance. They follow up on any attendance concerns and have established clear systems to support families. Staff work closely with pupils and their families to remove barriers to attendance. They draw on external professional support where needed. Most pupils arrive with very low attendance and many with a history of non-attendance. Although pupils' overall attendance remains below the national average, leaders' actions are making a positive difference. As a result, most pupils' attendance improves on arrival at the school.

## Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There are inconsistencies in the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. Leaders are addressing these, but their work is at an early stage of development. The curriculum is generally well planned and sequenced, but the quality of teaching does not yet support effective delivery of the intended core knowledge.

Teachers do not consistently check on pupils' understanding throughout lessons. In subjects where assessment is more fully developed, teachers use this to inform their teaching, adapt the curriculum and ensure gaps are identified and closed. Training has been provided for staff to improve the quality of teaching in the school. However, this is not yet embedded and, therefore, it has not had a consistent impact across the school.

Leaders recognise that many pupils arrive with significant gaps in the important knowledge they need to for communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Planned catch-up teaching helps pupils secure this knowledge more quickly in reading and phonics than in other areas.

Leaders have extended the curriculum and the range of qualifications pupils can pursue. The vocational offer, including hair and beauty, construction and vehicle maintenance, is now a strength of the curriculum at key stage 4. This has been carefully considered to meet the needs of individual pupils.

## Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

The school is not improving as quickly as it could. Leaders have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas that require development. They act with integrity and make decisions in the best interests of the pupils. However, more time is needed for leaders' work to have the positive impact they seek. For example, leaders' aim of improving teaching across the school is not fully realised.

Governors have not previously challenged leaders well enough. This has resulted in them having an imprecise picture of the school's work in most areas. Governors have an awareness of the school's areas for development. However, actions to tackle these have not been focused, and improvements in the school have not been targeted or quick enough. Governors' work has been affected by the challenges of recruiting to the governing body. They now have new members, adding expertise and support to the school's development programme.

Leaders ensure that all staff, including early career teachers, access an appropriate professional development programme. Leaders take steps to manage staff workload and wellbeing, creating a supportive working environment. As a result, staff feel well supported and valued. There have been recent changes in the school's leadership. Staff are positive about the impact of these. They share leaders' ambition to improve outcomes for all pupils.

# What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are welcomed into school each day by staff and the school's therapy dogs. This supports a settled start to the day. In classrooms, pupils are generally engaged in their learning. During social times and around the school, some pupils do not behave well enough due to inconsistencies in the approach to managing behaviour. However, most pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe. If any bullying or discrimination occurs, pupils trust that staff will listen and deal with it effectively.

Pupils are valued, and their wide-ranging needs are generally understood at this school. Pupils develop positive relationships with the committed staff. They know staff will support them. The pastoral and wellbeing provision is a strength of the school. Effective partnerships with parents and carers support pupils. This helps most pupils, many of whom have had a negative experience of school, to re-engage with education. Attendance at the school is improving for most pupils.

Many pupils benefit from strategies that address their individual barriers to achievement. Where this is the case, and where the curriculum is taught most effectively, pupils make progress from their starting points. This enables most pupils to access the broad range of qualifications that are available. However, across the school, the quality of the curriculum and teaching is inconsistent. This results in some pupils not progressing as well as they could.

A well-considered and appropriate programme of personal development extends across the curriculum. In addition, all pupils have access to wider enrichment opportunities. These prepare pupils for life after school. For example, pupils take on responsibilities as peer mentors or members of the school council.

The most vulnerable pupils, who need extra support, benefit from the bespoke programmes they receive in the school's on-site alternative curriculum provision. This helps these pupils to overcome the multiple barriers to learning they face.

---

## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that high expectations for behaviour are understood by all staff and that these expectations are consistently applied across the school.
  - Leaders should ensure that effective teaching is embedded across the school so that all pupils progress well across the curriculum.
  - Leaders and governors should develop a robust understanding of their roles and responsibilities, ensuring that precise and appropriate actions drive swift improvements across all areas of the school's work.
  - Leaders should rigorously monitor the progress of all pupils and analyse data to ensure their strategies make a sustained difference to pupils' opportunities and experiences.
-

## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Andrew Halpin.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up her post in January 2026.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. The school predominantly caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, Autism Spectrum Disorder and cognition and learning needs.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Nathalie Fitzgerald

---

### Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Liz McIntosh, Ofsted Inspector

Emma Law, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 13 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**161**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

### **School capacity**

**150**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**70.19%**

Well above average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

### **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**98.76%**

Well above average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.1%

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**1.24%**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13%

## **Location deprivation**

**Well below average**

### **What does this mean?**

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

**No resourced provision**

### **What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## **Type of specialist provision (if applicable)**

**SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health**

### **What does this mean?**

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

## **Destinations after 16**

### **Destinations after 16**

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	63%	91%	Not available
2022 leavers (revised)	61%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	66%	94%	Not available

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	27.5%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	28.5%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.6%	9.0%	Above

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	60.8%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	67.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	66.5%	26.5%	Above

## Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### **Strong standard** ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### **Expected standard** ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### **Needs attention** ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### **Urgent improvement** ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

---

**The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)** inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright