

Halfway Junior School

Address: Halfway Centre, Halfway, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S20 4TA

Unique reference number (URN): 107046

Inspection report: 17 March 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is a strength of the school. Overall attendance is above national averages as is the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders' carefully-considered approach is securing improvements to attendance over time. Their strategy is rooted in the positive relationships and interactions that exist within the school community. Pupils are motivated to attend and parents feel supported. Leaders use a wide range of information to understand the causes of absence and tailor support accordingly. Persistent absence has reduced over recent years.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently positive and reflects a culture of learning. They demonstrate high levels of self-discipline. Where pupils are asked to improve their work, they respond well, demonstrating positive, cooperative attitudes. Pupils show empathy and when working in partnership with their peers, for example, they support each other sympathetically when reading aloud. Outside, pupils play well together, successfully refereeing their own football games. The school has embedded familiar routines in establishing a calm and orderly environment. Instances of suspension are rare, and are only used as a last resort. Staff regularly reinforce key messages about responsibilities and the importance of positive relationships. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently and is well understood by all. Pupils welcome being rewarded with house points. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school has a tangibly inclusive culture. Where pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), well-trained staff identify these needs swiftly and accurately. The school has introduced a rigorous process of checking and reviewing the progress of pupils who face barriers to learning. Pupils' tightly-focused individual plans support this process. Leaders work productively with parents, external agencies and feeder schools, which helps pupils get off to the best possible start when they join the school.

Staff receive well-planned training that reflects the particular needs of pupils at the school. This equips staff well to make adaptations or provide the support pupils need to succeed. In lessons, pupils with SEND benefit from well-considered strategies that are skilfully adjusted if necessary. The voice of pupils and parents is consistently valued.

Pupils with SEND are fully involved in school life, including enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs. Adults provide pupils with a warm, kind welcome at the start of the school day.

Pupils receive targeted interventions which leaders regularly review. Leaders have a secure understanding of the needs and barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. Pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to improve achievement, attendance and engagement. The pupil premium strategy aligns with the school's wider improvement priorities. Where necessary, the school makes effective use of alternative provision in meeting the specialist needs of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders demonstrate a well-informed and accurate understanding of the school's provision. They have introduced robust systems to support them in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their actions. The school benefits from its links with external agencies and draws upon a wide range of expertise. Leaders systematically evaluate the impact of this support. To do so, they use a wide range of evidence, including published data, pupil voice and pupils' work. Frequent and forensic reviews of attendance information are resulting in improving trends. This strategic approach enables leaders to act decisively and to swiftly bring about necessary improvements.

The school's investment in staff development is strategic and responsive to a changing pupil profile. Regular professional development and bespoke training contribute to an increasingly skilled workforce. This work to improve teaching and develop staff expertise is leading to marked recent improvements to pupils' achievement. Leaders' detailed knowledge of the quality of provision helpfully informs ongoing refinements. The curriculum is well designed and generally well implemented. Leaders have a clear understanding of where greater consistency still needs to be secured. Leaders have credible plans to ensure teaching becomes of a consistently high quality. The school is rapidly improving aspects it recognises as requiring further strengthening.

Governors understand their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. They help define and safeguard the school's vision and strategic direction. Governors provide astute challenge and support to school leaders.

Leaders' oversight and consideration of staff workload and wellbeing is embedded and informed by regular dialogue with staff. Staff feel well supported and can speak to any leader if needing help or support. Parents are very positive about the school and its leadership.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders have carefully constructed a comprehensive personal development programme. They have planned an extensive range of opportunities intended to empower pupils, spark their interests and prepare them well for their future lives. Leaders recognise the importance of the life skills pupils will benefit from in the future and have clear plans to provide these.

Pupils engage confidently in the school's 'Life Lessons' curriculum, demonstrating secure knowledge of concepts across personal, social and health education (PSHE). They learn of the importance of healthy relationships. The school's PSHE curriculum has been crafted in response to local needs. It has an emphasis on healthy eating and social diversity. Pupils articulate their learning with clarity, demonstrating the school's focus on oracy. They confidently explain how identity is shaped by experience, culture, beliefs and religion. When discussing the importance of healthy eating, pupils debate with sophisticated reasoning. They learn how their bodies change as they get older and go through puberty.

Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of diversity, inclusion and respectful relationships. They express clearly and positively that any new pupil would settle easily, regardless of their background. Pupils understand democratic processes, explaining how

voting and leadership work within the school context. They feel safe and speak confidently about the range of trusted adults and friends who support them.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a broad range of leadership opportunities, including roles such as Young Leaders, School Councillors and Peer Mentors. Through these roles, they develop responsibility, teamwork and citizenship. These pupils contribute to school life by running the tuck shop, delivering assemblies and supporting foodbank initiatives. Participation in fundraising events such as Macmillan coffee mornings and sponsored walks enhances their understanding of community contribution. Pupils access enrichment activities such as sports clubs and choir. Older pupils participate enthusiastically in a residential visit.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils are generally developing the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2025 reflect notable improvements in reading, writing and mathematics from the previous year. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils also improved in 2025.

The curriculum is securely embedded and thoughtfully sequenced, enabling many pupils to progress through it as intended. In many subjects, pupils demonstrate secure recall of key knowledge and apply this effectively. However, inconsistency in pupils' recall of learning in some subjects suggests that not all pupils are securing the knowledge the school has prioritised. Where pupils continue to struggle with the basics of reading and writing, the school works well to identify and address gaps, for example through additional phonics sessions or handwriting practice.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers make thoughtful decisions to ease pupils' access to the curriculum, such as providing key vocabulary or pencil grips where pupils require this support. Tasks are varied and considered. Teachers use questioning well to prompt pupils' reasoning and to encourage clear explanations.

Teachers use effective strategies to build pupils' knowledge over time. They provide frequent opportunities to revisit prior knowledge. Pupils refresh their memories of how to punctuate speech, using exemplar texts with direct speech before applying it themselves. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' knowledge and adapt plans to address misconceptions. In mathematics, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. A love of reading is promoted and encouraged by teachers who read aloud to pupils frequently.

Teaching, while improving, is not yet consistently effective across all classes. On occasion, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are paying attention to important explanations or to other pupils' responses. Occasionally, teaching is slower to move pupils' learning on.

Leaders are aware of these inconsistencies and have credible plans to ensure teaching becomes more consistently effective.

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

Pupils attend a welcoming and inclusive school where a clear vision and values run through the heart of all its work. The school has established an inclusive culture where everyone belongs. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak positively about their learning and their teachers. They feel listened to and valued. The school provides a sympathetic, warm welcome for pupils who struggle at the start of the day. The school supports all pupils with kindness and care. Where pupils face barriers to learning, the school works effectively to reduce these.

Pupils engage confidently in lessons, articulating their learning with clarity. They take pride in their work and respond well to challenge. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and respond accordingly. There are some isolated cases where pupils have gaps in their learning that hinder their achievement. In some lessons, pupils lose focus and this is not consistently addressed in a timely way.

Pupils play cooperatively at social times, showing self-regulation and independence. Peer Mentors support problem-solving, conflict resolution and positive interactions. Pupils are safe and feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe online and offline. They understand that bullying is not tolerated. Instances are rare and dealt with swiftly and decisively.

Pupils benefit from a range of leadership opportunities and contribute to school life in meaningful ways. They develop responsibility and citizenship through these roles. They participate in fundraising events. They enjoy a broad range of enrichment experiences including sports clubs, cultural activities and a residential visit. They develop the knowledge they need to thrive in modern Britain and in their future lives. Pupils have a keen awareness of people's differing backgrounds and beliefs.

Attendance compares favourably to national averages. Pupils are motivated to attend. The school has developed a culture where pupils want to attend and learn.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to ensure that staff foster a culture of attentive industriousness on the part of all pupils so that they build their knowledge and achieve consistently well.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Catherine Taylor-Best.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and head of school, as well as several other leaders, including those responsible for the school's curriculum and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the governing body and met with a range of staff. Inspectors carried out learning walks across the school in a range of subjects and reviewed pupils' work. They met with groups of pupils and observed social times. Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including those related to the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and governance.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Headteacher: Debbie Shepherd

Lead inspector:

Dughall McCormick, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Neil Butler, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Higginbottom, 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

194

Close to 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: 272

School capacity

224

Close to 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

30.93%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

2.06%

Close to 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.56%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	72%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	22%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	25%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	14%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	43%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	42%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	32%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	43%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	22%	68%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	14%	67%	-53 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	66%	-39 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	43%	80%	-36 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	78%	-42 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	32%	78%	-45 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	78%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	78%	-42 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	27%	77%	-50 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	43%	80%	-36 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	79%	-43 pp

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)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	11.1%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.7%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.9%	16.2%	Close to average

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.

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