

Ryhope Junior School

Address: Shaftesbury Avenue, Ryhope, Ryhope Junior School, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 0RT

Unique reference number (URN): 108787

Inspection report: 2 June 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 ●

Pupils' behaviour at Ryhope is excellent. Highly positive relationships and a strong focus on pupils' personal development build a firm foundation for pupils. This creates an environment in which discrimination and poor behaviour are extremely rare. Staff do not tolerate derogatory language, bullying or other undesirable behaviours. Staff deal with any issues swiftly and effectively. Pupils demonstrate a keen appetite for learning and concentrate well in lessons. Well-trained staff make discrete and effective adaptations for pupils who occasionally experience difficulty with their emotions. Pupils have appropriate access to a range of welcoming calm spaces throughout the school.

Leaders' work on attendance has had a notable impact over time. Through the building of positive relationships with families, pupils' attendance has improved and persistent absence has decreased. This is highly positive for all groups of pupils, but most obvious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The persistent absence rate for pupils with SEND has decreased significantly over time. Likewise, pupils' attendance is now equal to the highest rates of attendance in the last 7 years. Where a small minority of pupils do not attend school regularly, leaders seek to source effective support to improve pupils' attendance.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

As a result of well-planned and effective training, staff identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. They remove barriers to learning or wellbeing swiftly and effectively. Leaders make every effort to source high-quality support for pupils. This involves drawing on the considerable expertise across the staff team as well as through effective engagement with appropriate external agencies. Strategies for the identification of pupils' needs consistently enhance their experiences in school, including for the most vulnerable pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get tailored support to meet their needs. As a result, these pupils do very well in school, achieving highly from their different starting points. The school uses its pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make secure progress through the curriculum from their starting points. Their work in books shows clear improvement in quality over time. Leaders also ensure that highly effective pastoral support gives pupils the sensitive and effective support that they need to thrive.

Leaders, including governors, have clear and unswerving ambition for pupils who experience any form of difficulty in school. Leaders monitor pupil progress rigorously. They leave no stone unturned in their pursuit of the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and governors ensure that they understand the areas of strength within the school. They identify areas that need further work and put effective strategies in place to ensure that they prioritise these. A collaborative approach between leaders and governors ensures that

their actions have demonstrable impact. Leaders have strengthened the school's provision across all areas to enable as many pupils as possible to do well. Leaders think carefully about how and where to use experienced staff so that their knowledge and skills support those who are newer to the profession effectively.

Well-informed governors fulfil their statutory duties with great effect. They use their own knowledge and skills to evaluate the impact of improvement priorities throughout the school. They also seek suitable external expertise to help triangulate and validate the information that they gather about the school's work.

A motivated and dedicated staff team benefits from a well-targeted programme of professional development. This makes considerable and positive difference to their levels of expertise. Leaders emphasise the importance of staff's workload and wellbeing. Staff speak warmly about leaders taking account of staff pressures beyond the school. Their morale is high. Staff are proud and happy members of 'Team RJS', talking about 'very supportive' leaders who 'recognise and value the unique strengths of each member of the school team.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Leaders go to great lengths to support families as well as pupils. This is appreciated by parents.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have crafted a coherent and relevant programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This combines effective oracy work and a well-sequenced approach to the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. As a result, pupils are able to speak eloquently about their learning. All pupils are included in the wide-ranging programme for personal development.

Pupils have a highly effective understanding of the fundamental British values. They see democracy in action throughout the school, linking this more widely to their academic learning on Ancient Greece, for example. Pupils' understanding of discrimination and stereotypes is impressive. This contributes to developing their commendable empathy and consideration for others, including those with any perceived differences. Pupils ably demonstrate the impact of the PSHE programme in their attitudes towards one another. They demonstrate compassion for others and understand the concept of equity. This appreciation of others extends to those of different faiths or cultures. Pupils' spiritual development is considered and effective. The very high-quality pastoral support in school has a positive impact on pupils with varying levels of need.

The school's approach to PSHE also gives pupils a very effective understanding of physical and mental health. Pupils articulate clearly the importance of healthy eating and getting enough sleep. Pupils talk with understanding about the risks of online gaming and how to keep themselves safe when using technology. A suitable relationships education programme builds pupils' understanding of adolescence and healthy relationships.

There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and have their voices heard. Ambassadors for different curriculum subject areas talk about the work they do to change or improve the curriculum, for example. The Ryhope Rangers planted trees around

the school field to improve their local environment. Pupils at Ryhope are very well prepared for life in the community beyond the school gates.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Across their time at Ryhope, most pupils achieve well from their starting points at the beginning of Year 3. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff's resolute focus on securing pupils' foundational knowledge ensures that they have the tools they need to access the wider curriculum. This is especially evident in pupils' outcomes in the Year 4 multiplication check. Pupils' performance in this area is consistently above national results over time. Over time, pupils' attainment in national tests is typically in line with their peers nationally. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. Notably, disadvantaged pupils at Ryhope attain well in comparison to disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, the gap in published outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers varies. This gap is not closing swiftly enough.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders plan the curriculum carefully. They decide what the main priorities are and bring in the right expertise to make improvements. Because of this, their work has clearly led to the curriculum changes needed since the last inspection. Pupils' learning has improved as a result. Pupils' articulation of their learning is of a high standard due to the school's focus on oracy over the last 4 years, for example.

Typically, staff teach an exciting and engaging curriculum well. This enthuses pupils and strengthens the retention of their learning. Assessment processes are typically effective in checking pupils' recall of the curriculum. However, for some disadvantaged pupils, assessment of their learning is not sufficiently accurate. As a result, regular and common misconceptions are not identified swiftly, meaning pupils sometimes make repeated errors in their work. When pupils start the school in Year 3, staff seek to secure and develop pupils' foundational knowledge. Over time, pupils develop an effective bank of skills and understanding in English and mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need to progress well through the curriculum, across the school. The adaptations or adjustments to learning tasks for these pupils are often very subtle but effective. Pupils with more complex SEND learn a highly bespoke curriculum offer that is targeted to their individual needs.

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

Pupils at Ryhope are superb ambassadors for their school. They feel safe, are happy and feel valued as members of 'Team RJS'. Pupils take pride in the numerous responsibilities they have across the school, including subject ambassadors, roles in the pupil leadership team, Careers Crew members or Inclusion Ambassadors. This contributes to the vast majority of pupils attending school regularly.

Well-trained and vigilant staff understand the context of each individual pupil. Highly positive relationships exist between staff and pupils, which supports a positive culture of safeguarding. This contributes to a clear sense of care and nurture in school. Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour, empathy and understanding for one another. As a result, bullying, derogatory language or other poor behaviours are very rare. Pupils have the utmost confidence that staff would deal swiftly and effectively with any problems that may occur.

Pupils pay close attention in lessons and typically display a secure understanding of their learning. Consequently, most pupils make secure progress from their starting points. Pupils make meaningful links between different areas of learning. For example, pupils discuss the industrial revolution and compare this to the Mayan civilisation in terms of legacy. Others have a keen understanding of literary techniques, using figurative language to impressive effect in their independent writing. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they are typically well prepared for the next stage of their education. They attain in line with other pupils nationally over time.

Pupils of all levels of need and vulnerability get the chances they need to succeed, whether academically, socially or pastorally. The school's motto of 'learn to live' is central to pupils' wider development. Staff identify barriers to learning or wellbeing. Leaders then source the most appropriate support to address the barriers. Pupils are valued members of the school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curricular provision and assessment for disadvantaged pupils precisely identify and address gaps in knowledge, enabling the gaps between these pupils and their peers nationally to narrow.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Stef Jardine-Watson.

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 school staff, members of the local governing body, a local authority school improvement officer and the headteacher of the local authority virtual school. They also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, was appointed in September 2023.

Headteacher: Fiona Lynn

Lead inspector:

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Janet Madden, Ofsted Inspector

Lynn Chambers, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

167

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: 272

School capacity

240

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)

52.69%

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: 26.3%

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

2.40%

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

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).

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	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	80%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	49%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	44%	Close to average

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	71%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	68%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	60%	Close to average

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	60%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average

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	68%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average

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	49%	68%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	69%	-13 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-21 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	71%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	68%	81%	-13 pp
2023/24 (final)	80%	80%	0 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	78%	-15 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	60%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	59%	77%	-18 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	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	80%	81%	-1 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	79%	-16 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 (3 term)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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 (3 term)	14.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	14.1%	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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