

The Royal First School

Address: The Great Park, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 2HP

Unique reference number (URN): 110014

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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils generally achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders' strengthened approach to early reading, including the use of books that match the sounds pupils have learned, has led to improved reading outcomes. Pupils read with increasing accuracy and confidence. This supports access to the wider curriculum. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge of numbers and calculation. This reflects leaders' focus on pupils learning the curriculum's essential knowledge. Work is underway to help pupils apply their mathematical knowledge more accurately to deepen their understanding.

Pupils' books show that they learn the intended curriculum in full. Across subjects, they recall important knowledge and talk confidently about what they have learned. Their spoken responses and written work indicate that they develop the breadth and depth of understanding needed over time. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and show positive attitudes in lessons. As a result, they are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' attendance and check it closely. They have clear and well-communicated expectations about the importance of attending school regularly. Staff identify emerging concerns early. They act swiftly to understand and remove barriers to individual pupils' attendance. Leaders use proportionate and supportive approaches with families. They draw on timely conversations and tailored actions when needed. Leaders keep parents well informed about changes to procedures, including sanctions for term-time holidays. This reinforces leaders' high expectations. Attendance for most pupils is steady. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to further reduce persistent absence.

Pupils generally behave well and follow the routines that help the school day run smoothly. They are polite, cooperative and increasingly show positive attitudes towards their learning as they progress through the school. Staff apply behaviour policies and routines with increasing consistency, reinforcing a calm and orderly environment. Records of behavioural incidents show a clear and sustained decline over the last three years. When concerns arise, including those related to bullying or derogatory behaviour, leaders address them promptly. Leaders keep detailed records and work closely with pupils and families. Staff use restorative approaches to help pupils reflect on and improve their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that a well-structured and appropriate curriculum is in place. Where necessary, appropriate adaptations are used to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have focused on making sure that the essential knowledge pupils need to learn well is prioritised early on. Improvements in the deliberate sequencing of some aspects of the curriculum are enhancing teaching and pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders carry out regular checks on teaching. This gives them a clear understanding of what is working well and where further refinement is needed. Teachers develop the subject knowledge and expertise required to deliver the curriculum effectively. Leaders highlight improvements in how teachers use ongoing checks to identify pupils' misconceptions. Where this practice is most effective, staff address gaps quickly and pupils progress through the curriculum with confidence.

Writing remains a whole school focus. Leaders are continuing to ensure that teaching consistently secures the essential handwriting and spelling skills pupils need to better apply these fluently in their written work. In mathematics, pupils develop their knowledge of numbers. Leaders are now establishing strategies to help pupils confidently apply their knowledge of numbers more accurately in reasoning tasks, ensuring that pupils deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas as they progress through the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff welcome children into the early years with warmth and care. They greet them happily and help them to settle so that learning begins promptly. The environment is thoughtfully organised. It clearly reflects leaders' ambition to give children the best possible start. Staff know children's starting points well and use this understanding to shape routines and provision.

Staff introduce and revisit carefully chosen vocabulary through conversation, play and direct teaching. Tasks are deliberately planned to help children practise important knowledge and skills. For example, children confidently apply their understanding of 'one less' during independent activities. Clear structures, routines and expectations support this independence. Staff promote effectively children's personal, social and emotional development. They typically judge sensitively when to step in and offer support. Further developing the consistency of high-quality interactions by staff will support children to successfully secure and deepen new knowledge.

Phonics is taught with fidelity to the school's chosen scheme. Reading is prioritised and staff ensure children read regularly. Children develop the essential knowledge they need for early writing. This includes secure pencil grips and children's ability to apply phonics to begin writing letters and words in independent writing. The early years provide an inclusive environment, with adaptations made to teaching that enables all children to participate successfully.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture in which pupils' needs are identified accurately and early. Staff assess pupils' starting points precisely. They ensure that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive timely and appropriate support. When additional expertise is needed, leaders work constructively with external agencies. Curriculum and teaching adaptations are well-informed and purposeful.

The support provided for pupils with additional needs is effective in reducing barriers to learning. Leaders monitor the impact of this work. They make further adjustments where necessary. Leaders are developing the use of tailored plans so that these become

consistently useful working documents for all staff in supporting pupils with additional needs, thus enabling pupils' progress to be tracked and responded to with increasing precision.

Staff training is carefully prioritised. Leaders routinely source specialist information and guidance to enhance staff understanding, despite the challenges of operating within a small school team. The appointment of a SEND co-ordinator reflects leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils with additional needs receive high-quality support.

Leaders make thoughtful financial decisions so that resources are directed where they make the most difference. As a result, financial constraints do not limit pupils' access to the curriculum, wider opportunities or the support they need to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require continued development. They make well-considered decisions about which actions to prioritise, ensuring that improvement work is responsive to the school's context. The recent appointment of a special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator reflects leaders' and governors' strategic approach to reducing workload pressures in a small school.

Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties. They engage meaningfully with the headteacher, offering both support and appropriate challenge to assure themselves of the quality and impact of the school's work. Their contribution supports sustained improvement across key areas of provision. Governors are developing succession planning to help strengthen long-term leadership capacity.

Leaders act in the best interests of pupils. They model professionalism, high expectations and are committed to developing an inclusive school that prepares pupils well for life beyond the classroom in modern Britain. Professional learning is planned carefully, with leaders ensuring staff have access to the training they need. This is particularly significant in a small school with limited capacity. Leaders have been thoughtful in using coaching, targeted professional learning opportunities and collaborative partnerships to build staff expertise.

Leaders are strengthening links with wider networks, enabling staff to benefit from external moderation, shared practice and increased professional dialogue. Staff report feeling valued, respected and well supported. They speak positively about the school's sense of community. Leaders promote a culture of mutual trust and high expectations, contributing to a stable and purposeful environment in which pupils can succeed.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a coherent, well-sequenced programme for pupils' personal development. It reflects the school's context and ambitions. Leaders map the curriculum across year groups so pupils can revisit and deepen important learning. Leaders are now beginning to adapt and tailor this curriculum to better meet the changing needs of pupils in this school. They are ensuring it remains relevant, meaningful and responsive to the context in which pupils live and learn.

Pupils benefit from a broad offer that supports their confidence, character and sense of belonging. They are celebrated for achieving their Shining Brightly certificates, which recognise commendable behaviours and attitudes around the school. A wide range of enriching experiences complements this work, for example participation in sports, music and choir events, cultural experiences and opportunities to represent the school. Leaders track participation to ensure that pupils, including those who may face barriers to accessing these, can take part. Older pupils support younger children, contributing to a clear sense of community. The school's unique museum and links to royal heritage further enrich pupils' cultural understanding and sense of place.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They learn about personal boundaries, road safety, online risks and how to seek help. External visitors, such as the local police, enrich this learning. Whole school approaches, including the emotional regulation programme and targeted pastoral support, help pupils recognise and manage their feelings. Pupils describe the school as kind and inclusive. They show empathy and demonstrate the school's values in their interactions. Some pupils need further support to articulate specific concepts in personal, social, health and economic education independently. However, their behaviour, relationships and thoughtful responses show that important messages are understood and applied. Leaders' work ensures that pupils develop confidence, resilience and the knowledge they need for life beyond the school.

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

The school day starts with warm greetings and calm routines that help pupils feel settled and ready to learn. Pupils say they feel safe and it is clear that adults take their safety seriously. Pupils trust adults to listen and to act. They know that staff check concerns closely and respond quickly whenever pupils need help.

Around school, pupils are kind, polite and considerate. They play together happily, even in challenging weather, and support one another without prompting. Behaviour in lessons is generally positive and pupils respond well to staff expectations. Leaders' high standards are becoming established. Pupils understand what bullying is and say adults deal with concerns when they arise. Records show that incidents have reduced markedly over time, reflecting leaders' sustained focus on this area.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They talk enthusiastically about subjects such as science and history and recall key facts with accuracy. Daily reading routines are well understood, and pupils typically make secure progress in phonics. Leaders' recent work to strengthen the foundations of writing and mathematics sits alongside a wider effort to identify and reduce barriers to learning early. This is achieved through adaptations that help pupils confidently access the intended curriculum. Pupils attend regularly and, by the time they leave, they are well prepared for the next stages of education and for life beyond the school.

Pupils thrive through the school's rich, wider offer. Clubs run before and after school, and many pupils take part. Pupils particularly enjoy the distinctive opportunities created by the school's setting, such as exploring the on-site museum of royal artefacts. For many, the highlight of their time here has been meeting the King. On one visit, he completed and

unveiled a portrait of himself; a moment that gives pupils a strong sense of pride and belonging.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine the teaching of handwriting and spelling so that pupils build and secure the essential knowledge and skills they need to improve the accuracy and quality of their writing.
 - Leaders should further develop pupils' ability to apply calculation fluency to reasoning tasks so that pupils embed and use their mathematical knowledge with increasing accuracy.
 - Leaders should continue strengthening the consistency of monitoring and reviewing the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure adaptations are precisely informed by the impact of previous actions.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mrs Vivian Benn.

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 during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's next section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools is due in the next four years. The last inspection of this type took place in March 2024.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about this school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Victoria Harrall

Lead inspector:

Ian Howie, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Susan Kelly, 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

110

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: 272

School capacity

110

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

4.55%

Well below 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

4.55%

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

10.00%

Below 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).

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)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.8%	5.9%	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)	15.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.7%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.8%	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.

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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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