

Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Address: Whichers Gate Road, Rowland's Castle, Hampshire, PO9 6BB

Unique reference number (URN): 116310

Inspection report: 27 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.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception Year. The curriculum is carefully designed so that children's knowledge and skills build securely over time. Staff are knowledgeable. They identify and build on children's starting points quickly and effectively. Staff use their checks to adapt activities so that every child is successful. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop the strong foundations they need for future learning. This helps them to become well prepared for more complex learning in Year 1. Staff work closely with parents and carers throughout the year, helping children to feel settled.

Expert staff craft purposeful activities that support children's learning. For example, children delight in building their polar bear home from sugar cubes and marshmallows. This helps them develop their fine motor skills and encourages them to use specific language from a well-chosen text. Focused learning sessions are extremely well taught and supported by high-quality interactions. Staff focus on language, vocabulary building and forming positive relationships.

The environment is carefully designed to give children access to exciting and purposeful practice. Activities are varied and intentional, so they strengthen children's understanding. Reading through phonics is prioritised and taught knowledgeably. Children quickly get to grips with the knowledge and skills they need to speak, read and write. Children understand the routines and high expectations upon them. This helps children feel safe, confident and ready to learn.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Overall, pupils achieve well. They acquire appropriate knowledge and skills from their individual starting points. Pupils apply the knowledge they have previously gained in their learning. Pupils discuss their learning confidently and remember important information. They generally produce accurate work that demonstrates their curriculum progress.

Leaders successfully prioritise supporting pupils to develop important basic knowledge and achieving at the higher standard. Pupils generally acquire the skills they need to read fluently, write efficiently and use their times tables knowledge with increasing accuracy. Pupils benefit from positive educational experiences that prepare them effectively for the next stage of their education. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have improved over time. They are now in line with the national average.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' achievement is above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils are typically achieving well. Over time,

outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are in line with national averages.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the importance of improving attendance. Overall attendance rates are in line with the national average. Leaders have established effective systems to support families and follow up on attendance concerns rigorously. This includes when absence relates to term-time holidays. Staff are working well to help pupils and their families to overcome any barriers to attending school regularly. However, the rate of attendance for all groups of pupils is not meeting leaders' high ambitions. While the rate of pupils who are persistently absent remains close to the national average, it is increasing slightly over time, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, and there is a purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms. Pupils understand the rules and believe these to be fair and consistently applied. Playtimes are friendly, and pupils play well together. Staff deal with any incidents that arise fairly and effectively. Pupils understand the school's expectations and consequences clearly. Adaptations are made for pupils who require bespoke support to help them to meet the behaviour expectations successfully. Pupils know what bullying is and what it is not. Bullying is not tolerated, and leaders act quickly when concerns are raised. The school deals with any instances that fall short of its high expectations of behaviour promptly and consistently.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They make thoughtful decisions that strengthen pupils' knowledge and help them learn well. The curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious. It gives pupils the knowledge they need for their next steps. Reading is a key priority. Staff teach phonics consistently and model their expectations for handwriting and letter formation. Leaders promote pupils' vocabulary development through well-chosen texts and purposeful discussion.

The curriculum is well sequenced across subjects. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Checks on learning are used well to group pupils and to identify who needs extra support or extra practice. Staff help pupils secure important knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. They ensure that older pupils catch up quickly when gaps appear. Writing is becoming more fluent and accurate, with pupils taking pride in the presentation of their work.

Most teachers adapt learning at the right time and address misconceptions promptly. Staff know their pupils well, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make appropriate adjustments so that all pupils can access learning. Some variation in teaching the curriculum remains but leaders acknowledge and are addressing this. Their actions are timely and appropriate but are at an early stage.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff share high ambitions for all pupils to succeed. They have an inclusive vision for the school and clear oversight. Well-established systems help leaders to identify the barriers that some pupils have so that they start each day positively.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported throughout the school's provision. This starts with the timely processes for identifying pupils who need extra help. Leaders share information effectively with staff. Consequently, staff are clear about how to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. Pupils benefit from personalised programmes. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of the work they do and make appropriate adjustments to plans of support. Typically, the support that pupils receive ensures that they progress well in their learning across the curriculum. Regular training from skilled leaders helps staff to adapt their teaching. Pupils with SEND achieve well alongside their peers.

Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Staff implement targeted support that continues to improve outcomes for these pupils and promote equity across the school. The inclusive ethos across the school enables pupils who face challenges to develop both academically and personally. Everyone is welcome and supported.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious. They have a clear moral purpose to provide a high-quality education. The individual needs of pupils are central to their decision-making. Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They prioritise their actions, so they have a positive impact on the outcomes of the most vulnerable pupils. Staff, pupils and parents alike value this ethos.

Leaders and governors have an accurate oversight of the school. Together, they work to shape improvement priorities and check that actions are successfully implemented. Leaders are responsive to the needs of specific groups. They work diligently to maintain oversight of the barriers to learning individuals have and take action to reduce them.

Governors know their school community well. They have the knowledge and skills to carry out their statutory duties effectively. Governors use a wide range of evidence to check the quality of education. They offer both support and challenge when needed. Leaders and governors ensure that staff benefit from a high-quality, evidence informed programme of professional development. This training is sustained, coherent and linked closely to school priorities. Early career teachers receive the guidance they need to develop their practice and feel confident in their roles.

Staff describe a positive working culture where their workload and wellbeing are taken seriously. They feel valued, listened to and part of a united team with a shared purpose. There is a strong culture and commitment from staff towards the school's continuous improvement.

Pupils benefit from a well-organised programme for personal development. Relationships, sex and health education meets the statutory requirements. It is taught in a sensitive and thoughtful way. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, online and offline. They learn about people who are different to themselves and learn to respect and tolerate others. Pupils understand the fundamental British values and discrimination. They explain why it is important to learn about them now and for their future. Pupils understand right and wrong. They enjoy the chance to think about their own beliefs and experiences. Pupils reflect on a range of moral issues and consider alternative viewpoints within a diverse society.

Leaders seize every opportunity to widen the horizons of all pupils, but especially those who are disadvantaged. Pupils benefit from a wide range of creative, cultural and artistic experiences that widen their understanding of the wider world. Tailored activities, for example careers consideration as part of secondary school transition, helps pupils to broaden their horizons. Leaders closely monitor which pupils take part, including those who are disadvantaged or known to social care, and they adapt the offer when needed so that no one misses out.

Pupils know the school values of respect, creativity and courage. They demonstrate these through their positive relationships with others. Pupils learn about the importance of helping their community, for example, through meaningful charity work. This helps pupils to recognise the importance of being a good citizen, both locally and in the wider world. Right from the start in the early years, the school builds children's social skills as they learn and play together. They take part in activities that help them to cooperate, solve problems and work well with others. This develops their character and allows them to demonstrate consideration to others.

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

Rowlands Castle is a school that welcomes everyone. Staff greet pupils with a warm smile each day and show genuine care towards pupils. From the Reception Year to Year 6, pupils eagerly come into school each morning. Pupils feel safe and settled because nurturing staff know them so well.

As soon as children start in the early years, they learn how to socialise and follow well-established routines. These become second nature so that pupils develop independence and confidence. Pupils are positive role models for others. They are proud ambassadors who speak enthusiastically about their school and the enrichment opportunities. The school offers a wide range of visits, clubs and activities. These include cookery, musical theatre and a variety of sports. These help to develop pupils' talents and interests.

The school has high expectations for behaviour and attendance. Typically, pupils meet these. Attendance is improving for most pupils. However, some pupils, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not attend frequently enough. Playtimes are generally happy, harmonious occasions when pupils show genuine care for one another. Sometimes, pupils need more help to understand and manage their own

behaviour. Staff swiftly step in to provide it. Bullying is rare, and relationships throughout the school are positive.

Staff are ambitious for pupils' achievement, and pupils generally achieve well. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes. Where pupils have gaps in their learning, leaders act to improve provision and offer appropriate support. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND receive carefully planned support to access learning. Pupils have positive attitudes and are proud of their work. However, there are some inconsistencies in how effectively the curriculum is taught in line with leaders' clear intentions. Leaders are taking effective action, but it is too soon to determine the full impact of this work.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well across all year groups so that pupils secure the knowledge needed for future learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that their work on pupils' attendance has greater impact and leads to improved attendance and declining persistent absence.
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About this inspection

Information about this inspection:

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Bill Wilson.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, as well as representatives of the governing body during the inspection. The inspection team also spoke with staff, parents and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. Its last section 48 inspection was in December 2024.

The school currently uses no providers of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jayne Pavitt

Lead inspector:

Gareth Flemington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ginny Rhodes, Ofsted Inspector

Lea Hannam, 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 27 January 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

201

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

210

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)

16.42%

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

1.49%

Below 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

6.47%

Well 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).

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	70%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	80%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

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	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

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	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	57%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44%	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	74%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	60%	Above

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	70%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	58%	Above

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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	48%	68%	-19 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	69%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	66%	-22 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	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	80%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	78%	78%	-1 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	70%	78%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	78%	-5 pp
2022/23 (final)	78%	77%	0 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	59%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-25 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	67%	79%	-13 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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	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)	14.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	12.4%	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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