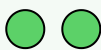


Sussex Road Community Primary School

Address: Sussex Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2TP

Unique reference number (URN): 118286

Inspection report: 31 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that pupils achieve highly across all year groups and key stages. Pupils build secure knowledge and skills through a carefully sequenced curriculum, enabling them to make impressive progress from their starting points. As a result, outcomes in national tests are high and reflect pupils' strong understanding and fluency across subjects. Pupils produce excellent work from accomplished writing to skilful physical education and musical expression. Pupils flourish academically, developing strong foundations in reading, writing, mathematics and communication from their excellent start in early years.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress and achieve well. Consistently high-quality teaching ensures that learning is inclusive, engaging and effective throughout the school. Pupils develop resilience, independence and a positive attitude to learning, which supports their continued success. By the time they leave, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education, having acquired the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to thrive.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They use this insight to make well-judged decisions that strengthen provision and ensure consistency across the school. Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for their next stages of education. Leaders and staff know pupils well. They adapt teaching effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known or previously known to children's social care. Reasonable adjustments and targeted support ensure that pupils overcome barriers to learning and achieve highly.

The curriculum is carefully planned and skilfully sequenced across subjects and phases. Leaders ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge through well-targeted professional development, enabling them to implement the curriculum effectively. As a result, teaching is consistently strong and supports pupils to build knowledge over time.

Staff teach phonics with precision and consistency, enabling pupils to secure strong foundations in reading and catch up quickly where needed. Across the curriculum, teachers develop pupils' language and vocabulary effectively through clear modelling and structured opportunities for talk and writing. Teachers and staff give precise and insightful feedback to help pupils to continue to improve their work.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children flourish joyfully in early years. Interactions are meaningful and high quality, ensuring that children acquire and use key vocabulary across all areas of learning. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength, helping children to cooperate,

share and develop confidence. Staff provide effective feedback and identify misconceptions, ensuring that errors in early writing are rarely missed.

The day begins calmly in reception. Children understand the tasks they must complete, such as preparing reading records or voting for a favourite story. Teachers model clearly, emphasising key learning points, and embed oracy through structured partner talk, storyboards and routines linking actions and words. Children practise and extend vocabulary and feed back in full sentences, using language with accuracy and confidence.

The curriculum is precisely planned and thoughtfully sequenced to develop knowledge, skills and vocabulary. It is enriched through visitors, trips and a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment. Outdoor provision extends learning, promoting problem-solving, cooperation and physical development. Children develop perseverance and resilience when constructing ambitious projects, transport water or explore sand and gravel. Routines support healthy choices, hygiene and smooth transition into the wider school environment.

Phonics provision is excellent. Children are confident in early reading and develop strong foundations in both reading and writing. The combination of high-quality interactions, targeted support and a well-sequenced curriculum ensures that children make strong progress across all areas of learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have established a strong culture of inclusion, underpinned by precise identification and assessment of pupils' needs. Robust screening systems enable staff to identify needs swiftly, including for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known or previously known to children's social care. Leaders review assessments regularly and use this information to shape well-targeted provision.

Leaders reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing effectively through strategic support, reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice. Teachers adapt learning consistently, ensuring that pupils access the full curriculum. Personalised plans are sharply focused, enabling pupils to make positive steps of progress over time.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress rigorously and evaluate the impact of interventions closely. They refine provision in response to evidence, ensuring that support remains effective. The school uses pupil premium funding strategically to provide academic and pastoral support, helping to ensure positive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those known to children's social care.

Staff benefit from high-quality training on the school's approach, which leaders monitor carefully. Leaders work in close partnership with families, professionals and external agencies to shape effective support and raise aspirations. This coordinated way of working ensures that pupils receive timely, well-matched support and achieve well from their starting points.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders have established a well-sequenced and highly effective personal development programme that supports pupils' emotional and wider development across all year groups.

From the early years, pupils engage in well-designed learning to regulate their emotions, make considered choices and reflect on their experiences. As they move through the school, pupils learn to respect others' values, understand right and wrong, and engage thoughtfully with ethical issues. Older pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of fundamental British values and actively participate in democratic processes, collaborative projects and community initiatives.

The school promotes inclusivity and cooperation superbly. Pupils build social skills through structured opportunities for teamwork, conflict resolution and leadership. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from carefully tailored support, ensuring that they access the full curriculum and develop confidence alongside their peers. Leaders track pupils' progress in personal development closely and adapt provision to meet emerging needs, including targeted pastoral interventions.

Relationships and health education is age-appropriate and comprehensive. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and both online and offline safety. Leaders reinforce pupils' physical and mental wellbeing through PSHE lessons, cooking sessions and wider health-focused activities. Pupils understand how to maintain wellbeing and make informed choices about lifestyle and welfare. The school strengthens this work with inspirational guests, such as the police who visited with their police car to boost pupils' knowledge of staying safe.

The school provides a broad range of creative, cultural and sporting opportunities that enhance pupils' talents and interests. Trips, visits, artistic projects and community initiatives broaden pupils' experiences and reinforce learning. Pastoral support is strong; pupils know trusted adults they can approach, and leaders ensure that individual and group needs are met through timely, evidence-informed interventions. The school's personal development programme is ambitious, inclusive and carefully monitored. Leaders ensure that pupils grow as confident, reflective and socially responsible individuals, equipped with the awareness, skills and character to thrive now and in the future.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance for most pupils is above the national average. Leaders' actions have reduced persistent absence across the school, reflecting effective systems and clear expectations. Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that most pupils attend school highly. As a result, many individual pupils attend well despite barriers they may have encountered in the past. However, attendance for some disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has declined. Persistent absence for these groups has increased, and gaps are widening. Governors receive some information, but monitoring and challenge lack precision. Leaders recognise these weaknesses and have begun to strengthen their approach to improve attendance for all pupils.

Behaviour is generally very positive. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming, and they conduct themselves well in lessons. Attitudes to learning show enthusiasm and pride in

work. At social times, pupils play cooperatively across different classes and year groups, leading to joyful playtimes and enriching lunch activities. However, occasionally movement around the school is not always orderly and pupils need reminders. Most pupils feel behaviour is managed well and trust staff to address concerns. Leaders take any worries seriously and address pupils' worries swiftly and effectively. They use suspensions appropriately as a last resort.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They prioritise actions to enhance learning, wellbeing and inclusion, ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are known or previously known to children's social care, receive appropriate support. Decisions are consistently made in the best interests of pupils, and leaders act to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Leaders have established a high-quality, evidence-informed professional development programme that supports all staff, including early career teachers, to develop expertise. Training is coherent, sustained and tailored to the school, enabling staff to implement inclusive and effective practice. Leaders monitor the impact of training and adjust provision to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and learning across the school.

Leaders actively manage staff's workload and wellbeing. They foster a positive culture where staff feel supported and valued. Leadership and governance ensure that the school operates efficiently, maintains high professional standards and provides a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all pupils. Leaders' dedication, diligence and high expectations ensure strong success across inclusion, curriculum, achievement, personal development and early years. As a result, pupils thrive in this successful school.

Governors meet their statutory duties robustly and provide constructive support and challenge. They hold leaders to account for the management of resources, pupil outcomes and the effectiveness of school initiatives. Leadership and governance have been less effective in monitoring and improving attendance for vulnerable groups. In this area, oversight has been less precise, limiting the impact of strategies to address the persistent absence of some disadvantaged pupils.

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

Pupils are friendly, confident and safe in this happy and caring school. They collaborate and play happily across every year group. Pupils can share any concerns with caring staff and leaders. Bullying is rare, and staff address any incidents swiftly and effectively. Behaviour in classrooms reflects highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons and readily apply their growing skills and knowledge. Pupils take pride in earning team points by demonstrating the school's values of being respectful, responsible and ready. They develop these attributes through a range of responsibilities and extracurricular activities, including highly enriching trips. For example, pupils visit the Docklands to deepen their understanding of World War Two. Residential trips help pupils to learn teamwork,

independence and resilience. Pupils develop into responsible citizens through leadership roles, such as representing the eco committee.

Children make a strong start in early years, where staff's interactions are purposeful and of high quality. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Teachers adapt learning skilfully and use a range of strategies and resources to help pupils overcome barriers and achieve well. This excellent work particularly benefits disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. In published assessments, pupils' attainment is significantly above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils learn and retain key knowledge impressively as a result of consistently strong teaching. Teachers and support staff design engaging tasks and provide effective support, ensuring that learning is inclusive and effective across the well-designed curriculum.

Most pupils attend school highly. However, attendance for disadvantaged pupils is lower. Leaders and governors are taking action to address this. They recognise that persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is increasing, and they are strengthening their strategies to secure consistently high attendance for all pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should strengthen their work to improve attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Michael Frank Webber.

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, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the curriculum leaders, the teachers, the support staff, the pupils, the parents and carers and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Miles

Lead inspector:

Scott Reece, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz McIntosh, Ofsted Inspector

Victoria Voller, Ofsted Inspector

Katie Hancock, His Majesty's 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 31 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

420

Above 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

420

Above 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)

9.76%

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

0.71%

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

16.19%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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).

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	85%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	85%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	60%	Above

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	91%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	92%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	88%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	71%	Above

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	91%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	94%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	42%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	56%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25%	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	71%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	50%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25%	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	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	42%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	69%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	25%	66%	-41 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 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	25%	77%	-52 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	79%	6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	38%	79%	-42 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)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.2%	5.9%	Below

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)	6.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.0%	16.2%	Below

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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