

Ruswarp Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address: Ruswarp, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 1NJ

Unique reference number (URN): 121525

Inspection report: 10 February 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 ●

The early years is a strength of the school. A well-planned curriculum takes account of children's starting points and prioritises their language and vocabulary. High-quality interactions consistently model the new words and language staff want children to learn. As a result, children's vocabulary grows quickly. Every opportunity is maximised to develop children's reading, writing and mathematical skills. Learning routines are well established. Children quickly grow in confidence and independence. They work for sustained periods, sharing and taking turns with others as they learn through play.

Children benefit from an exciting learning environment that is awash with books, songs and rhymes. Phonics is taught well. By the end of Reception, children are secure in the phonics knowledge they need to access the Year 1 curriculum. Staff are highly trained and make appropriate adaptations to activities to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive. Effective communication with parents and regular transition visits ensure that staff know children as individuals when they start in the Nursery Year.

Overall, above-average proportions of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This gives them the skills they need to succeed in Year 1.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is broad, well-structured and age-appropriate. Through a well-planned relationships and health education curriculum, pupils develop a strong understanding of healthy relationships, different family types and the importance of personal choice. Diversity is promoted and celebrated through annual events such as Anti-Bullying Week and Black History Month. The school's teaching of fundamental British values helps pupils to recognise and appreciate the many different faiths and beliefs that exist in modern Britain. The importance of British values is brought to life through opportunities for pupils to be democratic, for example when voting for equipment at breakfast club or choosing a reward.

Leaders and staff are adept at responding to the online and offline risks that pupils face. This includes organising workshops that promote safety near railway lines, and regularly teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Pupils' social skills grow through a range of leadership roles. For example, some pupils are 'leading lights' in the school. They meet with senior leaders to discuss and resolve school issues. Other pupils run lunchtime clubs for their friends. In addition, pupils participate in a rich and rewarding set of experiences. Trips to castles, residential visits and involvement in a local music festival help to develop pupils' confidence, independence and cultural understanding. Leaders ensure that this is a universal entitlement that enriches the experiences of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders encourage pupils to consider a variety of potential careers. They arrange inspirational talks from positive and diverse adult role models, such as female engineers and

artists. These help to challenge gender stereotypes and encourage pupils to be ambitious for their future lives. Throughout the curriculum, pupils are introduced to possible career paths to see value in their learning.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality closely. They reinforce the importance of regular attendance to pupils, parents and carers. Leaders follow local authority guidance closely to deter term-time holidays. They reward and celebrate pupils' attendance when it improves. Following periods of absence, leaders meet with pupils individually to reintegrate them back into school. This enables leaders to make the necessary adjustments that pupils need to settle quickly. Over time, attendance is steadily improving, thanks to leaders' actions. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Relationships between pupils and staff are deeply respectful. Staff greet pupils every morning to ensure they have a positive start to the school day. Regular check-ins for pupils who need them give pupils the opportunity to share their worries, manage their feelings and develop self-discipline. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places. The school's behaviour curriculum, 'the Ruswarp way', ensures that pupils are taught the school's high behavioural expectations. Staff apply these expectations consistently. At lunchtime, pupils' good manners are rewarded with 'golden tickets' and an opportunity to dine at the 'top table'. Pupils are polite, courteous and enthusiastic learners. Bullying and any other form of unkind or discriminatory behaviour are extremely rare.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Ruswarp is an inclusive school. All staff are committed to supporting pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders make regular checks on pupils' progress. This lets staff know whether the support they are providing is making a difference. Leaders use specialist advice to inform the support pupils receive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups are supported well overall.

Leaders work closely with parents and carers, and external specialists, to understand the barriers that pupils face in their learning. A well-established cycle of review ensures that parents are kept informed of the support and strategies in place to help their child. Parents' input helps to shape pupils' future targets and support. As a result, the provision pupils receive is closely matched to their needs.

Staff have received extensive training in how to respond to pupils' individual needs. They use their knowledge to adapt the teaching and the activities set carefully, so that all pupils can access the curriculum independently.

Additional funding is used well to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit academically and socially. For example, leaders employ a play therapist, who

provides pastoral support to pupils who need it. As a result, pupils' social and emotional needs are well supported.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor the quality of the curriculum and teaching closely. They use this information to inform the school's strategic priorities. Leaders' chosen priorities are sharply focused on improving pupils' outcomes. All leaders act in the best interests of pupils, while balancing demands on staff's workload and wellbeing. Leaders consult with staff on the changes they make. Consequently, workload and wellbeing are well managed. Staff morale is high. Staff are happy and proud to work at the school.

Governors have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. They monitor the impact of leaders' actions closely, providing the necessary challenge and support to the school. As a result, governors are clear on the school's improvement priorities and the progress that has been made.

Leaders have taken appropriate and timely action to improve the school. Staff are well trained. A programme of professional development is in place, and staff receive opportunities to work across the federation and with other local schools to share ideas and best practice. Since the last inspection, leaders have prioritised improvements to communications and parental involvement. Parents appreciate this work and value the opportunities they receive to be part of the school community.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics are not consistently in line with national standards. This is particularly evident in the number of pupils who achieve the higher standard in mathematics and writing. Over time, pupils who face barriers to their learning do not consistently attain as highly as they might. In some wider curriculum areas, such as history and science, pupils have not been sufficiently supported to embed their learning and remember it well. For example, pupils' understanding of chronology is not secure.

Younger pupils typically achieve well. Children in the early years are very well prepared for Year 1. Pupils read confidently. Their achievements in the Year 1 phonics screening check are usually similar to, or higher than, the national average. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to read new words and sounds. This ensures that most pupils start Year 3 as confident readers.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There are inconsistencies in teaching that slow pupils' progress through the curriculum. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' knowledge, which helps them understand what

pupils have remembered. However, they do not use this information with enough precision to inform future learning. Consequently, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not remedied quickly enough. In particular, pupils who face challenges with their handwriting do not receive the targeted support they need. This affects their presentation and achievement.

The key knowledge and skills that pupils must learn in each subject are clearly set out in the curriculum. It is aspirational, well sequenced and prioritises new vocabulary. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of subject-specific language and use it in their work. Leaders make regular and detailed checks on the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well.

Teachers model new learning clearly. They make carefully considered adjustments to the curriculum so that it is accessible for all. Leaders have put effective strategies in place to help pupils with gaps in their knowledge catch up in mathematics and reading. This is beginning to have an impact on pupils' knowledge of multiplication facts, for example. However, this is not yet the case in writing.

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

Pupils' happiness and wellbeing are at the heart of this small, rural school. Staff care deeply about each and every pupil. As a result, pupils feel safe and looked after. They report any concerns, confident that staff will act swiftly to resolve their worries. Pupils feel as though they belong to a large, happy family.

Since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. At all points of the day, the school is calm and tranquil. From the early years to Year 6, pupils are polite, respectful and caring towards one another. Bullying is incredibly rare because the school's values of respect, friendship and forgiveness are deeply embedded. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are identified quickly. They participate fully in school life thanks to the support they receive.

The curriculum inspires and engages pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are motivated to attend regularly. Pupils try hard and take pride in their work. In the early years, children get off to a great start. They build strong foundations for later learning, with a sharp focus on developing their language and communication. Some older pupils have gaps in their basic skills, such as handwriting and mathematical fluency. Where this is the case, pupils do not always receive the support they need to improve or the teaching required to address gaps in their knowledge. This affects the quality of pupils' work and the progress they make through the curriculum.

The school's personal development programme encourages all pupils to have high aspirations and big dreams for their future. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of opportunities to explore the beauty of their local area and places further afield. Trips to local forests, beaches and museums broaden pupils' views of the world beyond the village of Ruswarp and prepare them well for later life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that older pupils receive the targeted support they need to secure their foundational skills in handwriting.
 - Leaders should ensure that assessment information is used to plan future learning, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed.
 - Leaders should ensure that more consistently effective teaching drives improved achievement, so that published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are more closely aligned with standards achieved nationally.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Victoria Smith.

The school is part of a federation called The Rise Federation.

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 spoke with the executive headteacher and other school leaders, the local authority senior education adviser, the assistant director of education for the Diocese of York, and a selection of governors, including the chair of governors, during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school was last inspected under section 48 in July 2023.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Mrs Helen Isaac

Lead inspector:

Chris Pearce, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Janet Madden, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

33

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

105

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)

13.33%

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

0.00%

Well 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

12.12%

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	50%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	62%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	75%	S
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	92%	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	55%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	72%	S
2023/24 (final)	44%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	59%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	74%	S
2023/24 (final)	44%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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		62%	
2024/25		63%	
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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		78%	
2024/25		78%	
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	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)	7.7%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.5%	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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