

Sheddingdean Community Primary School

Address: Petworth Drive, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8JT

Unique reference number (URN): 125958

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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that sets out what children need to learn and when. It prioritises early reading, writing and number, alongside learning across the wider curriculum. Warm relationships help children feel safe and ready to learn. Staff develop children's language through conversation, modelling vocabulary and extending what children say. Phonics is taught in a structured way, supporting children to begin learning to read. The indoor and outdoor environments support independence, exploration and the development of physical skills. Clear routines help children manage their own needs. Children, including those with additional needs, engage in a range of activities and access learning alongside their peers.

Adults support learning through purposeful interactions. They use questioning and prompts to help children think, talk and apply new skills. For example, adults encourage children to use mathematical language and explain their thinking. As a result, many children engage well and develop confidence. However, adults do not consistently check what children know or use assessment precisely to address gaps in learning. As a result, some children do not build securely on their prior knowledge over time.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clear programme for pupils' personal development that builds knowledge over time. Teachers ensure that pupils develop their understanding of healthy relationships, how to stay physically healthy, personal safety and life in modern Britain. Leaders check pupils' understanding. Pupils understand the school's values and develop an age-appropriate awareness of respect, difference and making positive choices. Leaders enhance this further through planned events, such as sports week and mental health week, which broaden pupils' experiences.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values and develop an understanding of different cultures and beliefs through assemblies, class learning and wider experiences. They show respect for others and talk confidently about staying safe, including online. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, including exercise and balanced diets, and learn simple strategies to help them manage and regulate their emotions.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and contribute to school life. Pupils take on roles such as sports leaders and librarians, and the learning council enables them to share their views. Leaders use this feedback to shape aspects of school life, including events that reflect the diversity of the community. Staff provide pastoral support that responds to pupils' needs. Positive relationships help pupils feel safe and included. Staff offer additional support where needed so that pupils can manage challenges and develop confidence and resilience.

Pupils take part in a range of clubs, trips and visits that broaden their experiences and support their development. Leaders take steps to widen participation, including providing additional support for some pupils. As a result, many pupils benefit from these opportunities.

Leaders have started to track pupils' participation more closely to strengthen their understanding of how well pupils attend enrichment activities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement across the school is variable. In some areas, pupils build knowledge and skills over time, but this is not consistent across subjects or year groups. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they could be. Published outcomes show a mixed picture, with overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics broadly in line with national figures. However, this reflects differences between subjects, with outcomes in reading and mathematics higher than those in writing. Writing outcomes are not as consistently secure. Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than others, particularly in writing and mathematics, where fewer reach the expected standard.

In key stage 1, pupils begin to develop early skills, but these are not always secure. For example, weaknesses in pupils' pencil grip and teachers' task design limit how well some pupils develop their writing. Although pupils complete work over time, the quality of work and expectations vary between classes. Leaders have prioritised handwriting and grammar, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply these skills in extended pieces of writing. This limits how well pupils develop fluency and independence.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils do not consistently build on what they have learned. Gaps in knowledge are not always identified or addressed promptly. As a result, some pupils do not remember key content or apply it with confidence.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance is not yet high enough. While some pupils attend regularly, attendance for those who face barriers remains a concern. Disadvantaged pupils attend less well than others, and persistent absence for this group is too high. Leaders have introduced clear daily routines to follow up absence and provide targeted support for individual pupils, which has improved attendance for some. However, leaders do not analyse attendance information precisely enough to identify patterns early or check whether actions are improving outcomes. As a result, improvement is uneven, and attendance for some pupils remains low over time.

Pupils usually behave well around the school. They show respect to staff and each other and respond to clear routines and expectations. Positive relationships with adults support many pupils, and targeted support helps some to manage their behaviour and take part in learning. Leaders review behaviour and have reduced the use of suspensions over time. However, staff do not apply systems for recording and reviewing behaviour consistently well. As a result, leaders do not always identify patterns or respond in a timely way. In lessons, pupils' behaviour varies. Some pupils lose focus, leading to low-level disruption that slows learning and limits how well pupils build their understanding.

Pupils feel safe in this welcoming school. Staff build positive relationships and establish clear routines that help pupils to settle quickly. Pupils understand the school's values and the behaviours expected of them. They say that staff listen to their concerns and deal with issues when they arise. Pupils report that bullying rarely happens, and they trust adults to deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils are typically polite and respectful around the school and move calmly between activities. However, behaviour in lessons is less consistent. At times, some pupils lose focus, leading to low-level disruption that affects learning.

Pupils enjoy learning across a range of subjects and engage well in some lessons. However, teaching is not consistent. Pupils do not always remember important knowledge over time, which limits how securely they build on prior learning. Writing is not taught consistently well and some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they could. By the end of Year 6, some pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance remains too low for some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, which disrupts learning and contributes to gaps in knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel supported, particularly within the specialist provision. However, support varies across the school. Some pupils do not receive the adaptations they need and rely on adult support to access learning. This limits how well they are able to engage with the curriculum.

Pupils contribute to school life through leadership roles and pupil voice opportunities, which build their independence and sense of responsibility. A range of wider opportunities, including clubs and visits, helps pupils develop confidence and broaden their experiences. Through these, pupils learn to respect others and understand difference.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Staff's approaches to inclusion are not effective enough across the school. Adaptations are not routinely evident in classrooms, and some pupils rely on adult support to engage in learning. However, leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to inclusive practice. They use pastoral support and targeted interventions to meet pupils' needs. In the Lighthouse provision, adults build positive relationships and use adapted resources and visual strategies to support engagement. As a result, pupils feel supported and can take part in daily activities.

Leaders identify pupils' needs and use a structured approach to provide support. They work with external agencies and maintain links with the alternative provider to support some pupils effectively.

Leaders prioritise staff training to improve how staff meet pupils' needs. Staff report that recent training has strengthened their understanding of adaptive strategies. However, staff do not apply these approaches consistently well, particularly when managing behavioural and emotional needs. As a result, practice varies between classes.

Arrangements to support pupils are not always precise or used consistently well to guide teaching. Leaders have identified the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. However, they do not use information sharply enough to evaluate how effectively these barriers are reduced. As a result, some pupils do not achieve or attend as well as they should.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, understand the school's strengths and identify appropriate areas for improvement. They are working to address a number of priorities across the school. However, alongside work linked to external support, leaders have not always focused sharply enough on the most important improvements needed. As a result, improvements are not yet sustained in practice.

Leaders have focused on key areas, such as reading and handwriting. While there are improvements in early reading, other initiatives are not yet securely established. For example, staff have received training to improve how they check pupils' understanding, but this is not applied consistently in classrooms.

Leaders prioritise staff development and link this to school priorities. Where staff have had time to practise new approaches, teaching has improved. However, leaders' checks on the impact of this work are not sharp enough. As a result, training does not lead to consistent improvements in pupils' learning.

Governors understand the school's context and gather information through visits and discussions with leaders. They provide support and ensure that statutory duties are met. However, they do not consistently challenge leaders about how quickly improvements are embedded or how consistently agreed approaches are used. This limits how effectively they hold leaders to account.

Parents value the caring environment the school provides, and staff recognise the support leaders offer. However, some stakeholders raise concerns about aspects of provision. Leaders have taken steps to address these, but improvements have not had enough of a positive impact.

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

Pupils feel safe in this welcoming school. Staff build positive relationships and establish clear routines that help pupils settle quickly. Pupils understand the school's values and the behaviours expected of them. They are polite and respectful around the school and typically move calmly between activities. However, behaviour in lessons is less consistent. At times, some pupils lose focus, leading to low-level disruption that affects learning.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and engage well in some lessons. However, pupils do not consistently remember important knowledge over time. This limits how securely they build on prior learning. Writing is not taught consistently well and some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they could. By the end of Year 6, some pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance remains

too low for some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. This interrupts learning and contributes to gaps in knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel supported, particularly within the specialist provision, where staff understand their needs well. These pupils engage positively and take part in activities. However, this support is not consistent across the school. Some pupils do not receive the adaptations they need, which limits how well they engage with learning and develop independence.

Pupils contribute to school life through leadership roles and pupil voice opportunities, which build their independence and sense of responsibility. Many take part in clubs, trips and events that broaden their experiences and help them develop confidence. These opportunities support pupils to become thoughtful and responsible individuals, and they develop an understanding of respect and difference through their interactions with others.

Next steps

- Leaders should check that staff identify pupils' needs accurately, understand the barriers to their learning and act swiftly to address these so that pupils achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding consistently well across the curriculum and make timely and precise adaptations to address misconceptions, close gaps in knowledge and help pupils learn the curriculum securely.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching enables pupils to build securely on their early letter formation so that they develop fluent, accurate and legible handwriting over time.
 - Leaders should continue to implement and review their attendance strategy so that attendance improves and is consistently high for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Dr Helen Fairman and Mrs Sian Middleton-Hatt.

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 governors, including a co-chair of the governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and spoke with pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 alternative providers, including one that is unregistered.

Hannah Riley: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Lorraine Greco, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mike Wood, Ofsted Inspector

Patrina Begley, 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

208

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)

13.94%

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

2.88%

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

13.46%

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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25%	60%	Below

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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50%	73%	Below

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	62%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35%	71%	Below

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	65%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35%	73%	Below

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	23%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	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	54%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	60%	Below

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	23%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	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	38%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	59%	Below

‘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	23%	68%	-45 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	66%	-50 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	54%	80%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	78%	-62 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	23%	78%	-55 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	77%	-61 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	38%	80%	-41 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	17%	79%	-63 pp

‘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 (3 term)	7.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	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)	19.0%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	18.1%	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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