

The Littlehampton Academy

Address: Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 6FE

Unique reference number (URN): 135745

Inspection report: 3 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.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made important improvements to the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious, broad and aligned with national expectations. The curriculum sequences content carefully. It focuses on building essential knowledge so pupils with lower start points understand important content and learn securely. Leaders know the quality of teaching in each subject and act quickly when practice needs strengthening.

Teaching is typically effective across most lessons. Staff use evidence-informed teaching strategies and structured practice to help pupils build secure knowledge. Leaders recognise that some pupils have barriers to writing. Strategies such as 'Practice 20' are improving pupils' written fluency and accuracy. Staff typically adapt teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them learn well. Leaders check pupils' reading fluency regularly and provide targeted interventions that reduce gaps.

Teachers regularly check for gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers usually adapt teaching to address misconceptions well. However, in key stage 4, pupils have not always benefited from a well-designed curriculum and consistent staffing. As a result, some pupils have larger gaps in their learning. At times, some teachers do not check the extent of these gaps and ensure they are fully closed before moving on to new learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders create an inclusive culture, which means that staff identify pupils' individual needs accurately and respond quickly to them. Staff assess the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils known to social care through coordinated pastoral, academic and safeguarding systems. This understanding shapes targeted support that removes barriers linked to trauma, low aspiration and inconsistent engagement with education.

The school reduces barriers to learning and wellbeing through well-designed adjustments and specialist provision. The school's therapeutic pathways, such as Strong Start and The Hive, help pupils re-engage and feel safe. Leaders broaden the curriculum through external alternative provision that aligns with pupils' interests, including specialist options such as motor mechanics. Staff monitor pupils' progress closely, tracking attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and academic outcomes to evaluate the impact of interventions.

Staff receive evidence-informed training on inclusive practice, enabling them to implement support strategies for pupils with SEND with typical effectiveness. Expert staff in The Scott Centre provide specialist support that helps pupils access the full curriculum. Leaders work with families, external professionals and the Virtual School to shape provision and raise aspirations. Pupil premium funding and targeted support for pupils known to social care are closely monitored to ensure they remove barriers. This inclusive approach contributes to rising numbers of successful first-generation university applicants.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need further improvement. They prioritise actions that remove barriers to pupils' success. Leaders adapt provision using research and shared best practice. They make decisions with pupils' best interests in mind, particularly those who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or pupils who face wider barriers to learning. Leaders use resources purposefully to strengthen leadership capacity and support roles that directly improve the wellbeing and achievement of pupils.

Governance arrangements are effective. Trustees and governors understand their statutory duties and provide informed challenge about the use of resources and the impact of leaders' actions. Clear accountability structures, including regular oversight from the trust, help ensure that improvement work stays on track. Governors' training and external reviews have strengthened their ability to hold leaders to account and to check that decisions benefit pupils.

Leaders ensure staff have access to a coherent professional development programme. Staff responsible for subject and pastoral leadership contribute to strategic school improvement. Staff value training that builds expertise in curriculum, assessment and inclusive practice.

Leaders consider staff wellbeing and workload when making decisions, protecting time for training and planning. However, a minority of staff note that the pace of improvement work has increased demands on workload. Leaders recognise that building stronger partnerships with harder-to-reach families remains a priority, as some parents continue to express frustration about communication and support.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a clear and broad personal development offer that reflects the school's context and priorities. Staff receive training that helps them teach the programme confidently. Leaders adapt the programme when pupils' needs or interests change, such as learning about staying safe in the community and online. Pupils learn about positive values and behaviours. They develop a secure understanding of right and wrong, including legal boundaries. Activities beyond lessons, such as remembrance events and cultural days, broaden pupils' experiences and help them understand life in modern Britain. A wide range of clubs runs before school, at lunchtime and after school. Leaders check participation to make sure all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can take part. Inclusive, quiet lunchtime clubs support pupils who find busy spaces difficult to manage. The school has carefully created welcoming spaces for pupils to enjoy and make friends.

Pupils generally enjoy personal, social and health education lessons. They remember important learning from relationships and sex education and health education. Recent teaching about drugs and their risks feels relevant to pupils because it links to issues they see on social media. Assemblies, tutor time and chaplaincy sessions give pupils safe spaces to explore beliefs, values and personal challenges. Tutor time follows a consistent structure, though some pupils feel these sessions do not always hold their interest. Pupils feel cared for and know they can approach an adult for help, and most say pastoral support meets their needs.

Sixth-form students benefit from a well-developed enrichment programme, including international visits and external speakers. They take part in work experience and leadership opportunities that build confidence and responsibility.

Careers education meets statutory requirements and is a strength of the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive impartial guidance and take part in careers fairs, work experience and preparation activities that help them make informed decisions about their future.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality and suitability of the post-16 study programmes. They have refined the curriculum so that courses match students' abilities and ambitions. This has created a more coherent and ambitious offer that meets students' needs. Teaching is effective because staff have secure subject knowledge and use assessment well to address gaps. Students, including those who are disadvantaged, receive the support and adaptations they need to make steady progress from their starting points.

Students achieve well and develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed. They produce work of a high standard. Those who need to resit GCSE English or mathematics receive well-organised support that helps them secure essential qualifications. Students are well prepared for their next steps. Careers education provides clear, impartial guidance. Students take part in work experience, hear from external speakers and receive helpful support with applications, enabling them to make informed decisions about education, employment or training.

Students benefit from a wide range of opportunities. Enrichment includes international visits, clubs and leadership roles that build confidence and broaden students' experiences. Relationships in the sixth form are respectful and supportive, and students feel well cared for.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Inconsistencies in staffing and previous weaknesses in curriculum design influence published outcomes. Pupils' achievement and progress, including those who are disadvantaged, remain well below national averages. Improvements in English and mathematics are starting to show the impact of leaders' actions, but progress is not yet rapid or significant enough to remove barriers to post-16 education, employment or training. Poor attendance also limits how well some pupils learn and succeed.

Curriculum and teaching improvements are strengthening current achievement and preparing pupils more effectively for their next steps. Where effective approaches are firmly embedded, pupils produce high-quality work and use new vocabulary and concepts with accuracy and confidence. Leaders' actions are helping to close gaps in learning. At key stage 3, pupils typically secure and remember new knowledge in line with curriculum

expectations. At key stage 4, achievement is improving, but some pupils still have unaddressed gaps that limit how fluently they can explain their thinking.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This is especially the case for those who are disadvantaged. This affects how well these pupils can learn and achieve. Leaders have introduced evidence-informed strategies that help staff understand individual barriers to attending well and on time. As a result, a clear focus on punctuality has reduced truancy during the school day. Furthermore, whole-school attendance has consequently improved. However, persistent absence remains very high and is not improving quickly enough when compared with national trends.

Behaviour expectations are clearly structured and understood by staff and pupils, helping to create calmer, more orderly lessons. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and say classrooms feel more settled, particularly in older year groups. Staff model care and kindness, and pupils generally feel well supported. Social times, however, feel less settled for some pupils. A minority of pupils and parents lack confidence that bullying or peer-on-peer issues are always resolved well, even though leaders have strengthened systems to address unkindness. Suspensions are beginning to reduce as support and strategies help remove barriers to positive behaviour. However, some pupils require further tailored support to behave well and meet the school's expectations.

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

Many pupils build positive relationships with staff and each other, creating a warm and supportive community. Staff take time to understand pupils' individual circumstances, which helps them feel included and valued. The school provides tailored support through strategies such as the 'Connect Pathway', enabling pupils to re-engage positively with learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support that helps them learn the curriculum and make steady progress.

Pupils usually experience structured, well-sequenced teaching that helps them recall prior knowledge and build new understanding. They talk confidently about routines such as retrieval activities, which strengthen memory and deepen learning. Some pupils, particularly those who do not attend school regularly, have gaps in their learning. They struggle to explain their thinking or keep pace with learning. Teachers work to close these gaps.

Published outcomes have remained low for several years and have not improved quickly enough to ensure pupils are well prepared for their next steps. In contrast, improvements in key stage 3 and in the sixth-form curriculum and teaching are having a positive impact.

Behaviour in lessons is typically calm and focused. Many pupils value quieter classrooms where they can concentrate. Social times are less settled for some pupils, where occasional negative behaviour affects pupils' sense of security. Pupils are well supervised and serious incidents are rare, but some pupils are not fully confident that concerns such as bullying are

always resolved effectively. Attendance expectations are high, yet too many pupils still do not attend regularly.

Pupils benefit from a rich personal development offer and varied enrichment opportunities to develop their talents and interests. These experiences help pupils understand how to manage risks such as rail safety. Pupils learn to build self-confidence and prepare for their future ambitiously, including developing their understanding of life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders must continue to refine and implement effective support to reduce persistent absenteeism and improve attendance of pupils.
 - Leaders must ensure that teachers are skilled at routinely checking pupils' understanding and starting points so they can expertly adapt teaching effectively, enabling pupils to achieve highly.
 - Leaders must continue to strengthen positive and inclusive approaches that help pupils manage their behaviour and reduce the risk of suspension.
 - Leaders should continue to foster positive partnerships and effective communication with parents and carers to ensure pupils receive coordinated support that helps them to succeed.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Woodard Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mike Pettifer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sally Pelham.

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.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the principal, the CEO of Woodard Academies Trust, the chair of the trust and additional trustees, the chair of the local academy council and an additional governor and other members of the school's leadership team during the inspection.

Published information about the school's use of permanent exclusions is not accurate due to an error. The school informed inspectors of this before the inspection commenced. Inspectors examined the school's rationale and the extent to which permanent exclusions are used.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for 13 pupils with autism in its specially resourced provision.

The school makes use of 3 registered and one unregistered alternative provisions.

Principal: Sarah Pringle

Lead inspector:

Michelle Payne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Gary Tostevin, Ofsted Inspector

Mike Serridge, Ofsted Inspector

Cathy Reid, Ofsted Inspector

Dijana Piralic, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,369

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,900

Well 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

25.72%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.87%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.00%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above 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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	31.8%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.8%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	19.7%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	37.2	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	37.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	33.8	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.69	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.85	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	21.4%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	14.1%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	26.7	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.6	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.32	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.30	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	21.4%	52.8%	-31.4 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	53.1%	-36.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	14.1%	52.4%	-38.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	26.7	50.3	-23.6
2023/24 (final)	27.5	50.0	-22.5
2022/23 (final)	28.6	50.3	-21.7

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.32	0.16	-1.48
2022/23 (final)	-1.30	0.17	-1.46

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	88%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Below

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	33.43	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.13	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	22.84	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.5	0.0	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average

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)	12.5%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	35.2%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	38.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	34.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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