

Sandwich Technology School

Address: Deal Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 0FA

Unique reference number (URN): 136317

Inspection report: 12 May 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.

This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify any barriers that pupils may face to their learning and/or wellbeing. They identify appropriate strategies and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are communicated clearly to staff. Typically, staff are effective in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders review pupils' support regularly and refine provision appropriately. Leaders ensure that pupils access specialist assessments and support where needed.

Leaders understand the barriers that disadvantaged pupils may face. They use pupil premium funding to help improve the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders recognise that some of their previous approaches have not had sufficient impact. As a result, leaders are becoming more systematic in how they review and adapt the pupil premium strategy. For example, they have developed a bespoke curriculum through the 'Sandwich link' that has enabled pupils to engage more purposefully in their learning.

Pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care are well supported. Leaders have a clear understanding of their individual needs. Leaders collaborate effectively with wider professionals to ensure that these pupils' needs are met.

Alternative provision is used appropriately and only where it is in pupils' best interests.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have put in place a programme of learning that supports pupils well in their personal development. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit important content so that they feel well prepared for life beyond school. Pupils are suitably knowledgeable about relationships and sex education and health education. They understand the risks they need to be aware of online, in relationships and in the community. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils learn about fundamental British values. Typically, they understand the importance of rules, justice and equality. Pupils are respectful of one another's differences. They are confident that discrimination is not tolerated in the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils have timely access to independent careers guidance. Pupils understand the different pathways available to them. They appreciate the work-related learning opportunities and careers fairs the school offers to bring this learning to life. Pupils are well informed about their future choices and well prepared for their next steps.

The school offers a broad range of opportunities for pupils to explore their talents and interests. Leaders ensure that all pupils have the chance to participate in activities within and beyond the school day. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special education needs and or/disabilities are supported effectively to access a wide range of opportunities. Pupils enjoy participating in clubs and performing in shows and events. Pupils appreciate the school's new 'house system'. They recognise how this has improved their sense of belonging and togetherness. Pupils appreciate the leadership opportunities available to them, which help to develop their independence, confidence and sense of responsibility.

Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing. Pupils understand the importance of positive mental health and know how to access support if they are ever worried. Pupils have confidence in staff to meet their pastoral needs.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The quality of teaching in the school is variable. Staff do not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. Some pupils who need to improve their reading and writing do not access the support they need to develop these important skills. Sometimes, staff do not adapt their teaching choices effectively. When this happens, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities participate in learning less successfully than their peers. In some areas of the curriculum, learning does not happen in an appropriate sequence that focuses on the development of knowledge over time. Sometimes, staff's expectations for pupils' written work are not high enough. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, who are often not encouraged to complete their work or to improve the accuracy of their writing.

Leaders understand where teaching is not as effective as it needs to be. They have taken appropriate steps to improve consistency. For example, the 'Sandwich start' provides pupils with a purposeful start to their lessons. In most subject areas, the curriculum has been designed carefully to ensure that pupils revisit important knowledge at regular intervals. Typically, teachers explain new learning clearly and make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Generally, staff have sufficient expertise in their subject areas.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Achievement in the sixth form is variable. In some qualifications and subject areas, students have gaps in their knowledge. Sometimes, students lack the necessary depth of understanding that they need in order to learn independently. There is variability in the quality of sixth-form teaching. As a result, students are not consistently well supported in knowing how to improve the quality of their work.

Leaders have put in place an appropriate curriculum that reflects the needs of students and the context of the school. Often, students benefit from smaller class sizes, where teaching choices are adapted effectively to meet individual needs. Typically, students, including those

with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make positive progress from their starting points.

Students are well prepared for their next steps. Students understand the future pathways available to them. They benefit from clear careers guidance and work experience opportunities that help inform their decisions about future pathways. Students are encouraged to develop their leadership skills through a range of responsibilities and community projects. Students enjoy participating in the wider opportunities available to them, such as trips, clubs and volunteering. Students are proud of their school and serve as positive role models to younger peers.

Urgent improvement ●

Achievement

Urgent improvement ●

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in national examinations. Often, disadvantaged pupils do not gain the qualifications they need to prepare them well for their next steps. Too often, pupils have gaps in their knowledge that widen over time. As a result, many pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, lack the foundations they need to support future learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and or/disabilities, make insufficient progress from their starting points.

Leaders do not systematically support pupils who are behind in their reading and writing skills. As a result, too few pupils catch up. Pupils do not consistently develop their reading and writing skills at an age-appropriate standard.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils' achievement varies. In some subject areas, pupils produce work of a high standard and demonstrate secure knowledge. In subjects where writing demands are higher, there is far more variability in the quality and accuracy of pupils' work.

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement ●

Leaders have not taken sufficiently swift action to address poor attendance. As a result, too many pupils continue to be frequently absent. Leaders recognise that their previous approaches to tackling poor attendance were not effective. As a result, they have recently made important improvements in their strategic thinking. Leaders now have a much clearer understanding of the barriers to regular attendance that pupils face. They are starting to tackle absence more effectively. However, it is too early to see the sustained impact of this work.

Leaders have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Typically, pupils understand what is expected of them and demonstrate positive conduct. Lessons are mostly calm and orderly. Typically, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, pupils disturb the learning of others. Pupils appreciate that this happens far less often than it used to. Generally, staff are effective in correcting poor behaviour and reinforcing expectations. Leaders provide effective support to pupils who need additional help in managing their

behaviour. Pupils appreciate how staff celebrate their positive choices. Leaders ensure that any incidents of bullying, discrimination or aggression are swiftly addressed and effectively managed. As a result, there has been a notable reduction in these types of behaviours, which now happen rarely.

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement 

Leaders have not taken timely actions to address some of the school's priorities for improvement. As a result, pupils' attendance has not improved, and achievement remains weak. Leaders do not have a sufficiently clear oversight of the impact of their work to improve attendance and achievement. In turn, governors are insufficiently clear on how much progress leaders are making towards these priorities. Governors do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour. Governors do not fully understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.

In other areas of the school's work, leaders have made more positive impact. Pupils' wider experiences have been enhanced as a result of higher standards of behaviour and much improved personal development. Pupils speak highly of these improvements and the positive difference these have made to their enjoyment of school. Parents and carers also recognise improvements that have been made in the school. In particular, they appreciate the quality of pastoral care and how well informed they are about their children's education. Leaders have been effective in building community cohesion and a caring ethos in the school.

Leaders are considerate of workload when making improvements in provision. Staff enjoy their work and recognise that leaders prioritise their wellbeing. Teachers in the earliest stages of their careers are supported effectively and feel valued. Typically, staff benefit from appropriate professional learning opportunities. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do in ensuring that staff have the expertise to meet some pupils' needs more precisely.

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

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in national examinations, particularly at the end of Year 11. Too often, disadvantaged pupils are insufficiently prepared for their next steps. Students in the sixth form make more positive progress from their starting points than younger pupils. Pupils who are behind in their reading or writing development are not effectively supported to catch up. Often, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), lack the skills that they need to be successful in their wider learning. As a result, pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged do not make sufficiently positive progress from their starting points.

Most pupils enjoy learning and have positive attitudes to school. However, too many pupils are frequently absent. Pupils who miss school regularly fall behind in their learning and do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils recognise that teaching is becoming more consistent. However, although their barriers to learning are generally identified accurately, some pupils do not benefit from

effective adaptations to teaching to help them with their learning.

Pupils appreciate the improvements that have been made in the school. In particular, pupils welcome the increased opportunities they have to explore their talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy performing in the annual music awards and participating in a wide range of clubs. Staff encourage all pupils to enrich their learning through these experiences. Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. They understand the importance of equality and respect. Typically, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils are happy at school and feel a secure sense of belonging. Staff build warm and caring relationships. Pupils feel safe because they are safe. Typically, pupils behave well. They are kind to one another and value the friendships they make. Bullying and discrimination happen rarely.

Next steps

- Governors should ensure that they fulfil their core functions effectively. Leaders and governors should ensure that they identify the right priorities and take swift action to secure sustained improvements.
 - Leaders should ensure that their work to improve attendance is effective and reduces persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
 - Leaders should take swift action to improve pupils' achievement. They should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly where pupils have not yet secured the necessary foundations in their reading and writing skills.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching is consistently effective across the school so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, achieve more securely and are better prepared for their next steps.
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About this inspection

This school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a governing body, chaired by Martin Hydes.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the school leadership team, members of staff, groups of pupils and representatives from the governing body.

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.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspections we carry out.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last graded inspection. The current headteacher and the chair of the governing body were not in post at the point of the last graded inspection. A proposal that the school joins a multi-academy trust was announced before the inspection took place.

Headteacher: Simon Sharples

Lead inspector:

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Eliot Hodges, Ofsted Inspector

Owen McColgan, Ofsted Inspector

Gavin Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Wilson, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,235

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,368

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.59%

Above 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

1.21%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.21%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

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 (final)	22.2%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19.1%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.7%	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 (final)	35.3	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	34.4	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.5	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)	-0.85	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.70	-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 (final)	8.6%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	9.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	16.1%	25.2%	Close to average

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 (final)	26.4	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.4	35.0	Close to average

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)	-1.21	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.05	-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 (final)	8.6%	53.1%	-44.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	9.9%	53.1%	-43.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.1%	52.4%	-36.4 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 (final)	26.4	50.4	-24.0
2023/24 (final)	29.5	50.0	-20.6
2022/23 (final)	32.4	50.3	-17.9

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)	-1.21	0.16	-1.38
2022/23 (final)	-1.05	0.17	-1.21

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 (revised)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Average

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 (final)	27.42	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	25.00	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.63	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 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	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 (3 term)	13.6%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	14.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	14.2%	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 (3 term)	43.2%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	44.3%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	44.5%	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.

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