

Mill Hill County High School

Address: Worcester Crescent, NW7 4LL

Unique reference number (URN): 137386

Inspection report: 11 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils of all ages develop detailed knowledge and skills across the subjects they study. They can draw links between pieces of learning where that is relevant, building a deep body of knowledge over time. Pupils achieve highly in national tests and examinations. Pupils' GCSE results generally sit above national averages, including in English and mathematics. In the sixth form, students achieve grades in line with national averages. This allows them to move on to their preferred next steps in education, employment or training.

Across the curriculum, pupils make strong progress from their starting points. This includes in their foundational knowledge of communication and language, reading and mathematics. Pupils who join with lower prior attainment catch up during their time in the school. Disadvantaged pupils achieve highly when compared with their peers nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress through the subjects they study. Pupils, regardless of their individual needs, gain the skills they need to be successful.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils demonstrate a love of learning and listen with interest to their teachers. Lessons have a studious atmosphere. Around the school, pupils are respectful and follow the school rules with ease. This is because all staff apply the rules fairly and consistently. Students in the sixth form lead the way with their maturity. The school is a harmonious place where pupils report that bullying is rare and never tolerated.

If pupils fall below the school's expectations for behaviour, there is an expert team of behaviour mentors to help them. With support, pupils learn to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it has on others. This results in a noticeable improvement in individual pupils' behaviour over time.

Pupils recognise the value in coming to school every day. Attendance at the school is high. The school works closely with parents and their families to support improved habits of attendance. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not always as high as their peers. The school takes the time to understand deeply the barriers faced by individual pupils. This allows them to take a personalised approach where needed to help pupils to attend more regularly. This work is having a positive impact.

Expected standard ●

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

The school has transformed its curriculum in recent years. The new curriculum is skilfully crafted across subject areas to build learning over time and to better reflect the diversity in the school community. In the sixth form, pupils choose from a broad range of A-level

subjects. The sixth form curriculum carefully bridges the gap from Year 11. This supports students with the increasing academic rigour of sixth-form study.

Teachers show their deep knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects when they deliver the curriculum. They explain new concepts clearly, helping pupils to secure new vocabulary and ideas. Teachers adapt the curriculum effectively to meet pupils' needs. Pupils often receive timely feedback on how to improve their work. However, sometimes, teachers do not correct gaps or misconceptions in pupils' understanding when they arise. This makes it hard for some pupils to recall accurately what they should know.

Leaders are particularly alert for pupils who join the school without the necessary foundations in communication and language, reading or mathematics. They provide effective support for pupils to develop these skills across the curriculum. Sometimes, however, some pupils need more help to use formal language or grammar correctly in their conversations and writing.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive community where all pupils experience a keen sense of belonging. The school works diligently to identify the needs of individual learners. Pupils' needs are ably supported by experienced and knowledgeable specialists. Leaders work effectively with families and professionals to reach decisions that put pupils' interests first. Academic and pastoral mentors support pupils with a range of needs to help them thrive.

All staff have a common understanding of the strategies they should use to help pupils succeed. Staff make and review appropriate adaptations so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access learning. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve alongside their peers. Leaders ensure that interventions are usually delivered effectively. In some instances, the bespoke curriculum offered to a small number of pupils requires further refinement to ensure that it is suitably ambitious.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders target additional funding carefully to support their attendance and academic outcomes. The school provides all pupils with a rich offering of enrichment activities. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the same access to these opportunities as their peers. Where appropriate, some pupils, including those with SEND, attend trips that help them develop their independence.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels have a shared understanding of the school's values and vision for the future. Leaders, including school governors, have an accurate view of the strengths of the school. Priorities for improvement are clear and commonly understood by all staff. Subject leaders in particular have been key drivers of improvement to the curriculum in recent years. Across all areas of the school's work, decisions made and actions taken are in the best interests of children.

The school offers a comprehensive package of training and support for teachers to develop their professional expertise. Staff benefit from coaching and mentoring to improve their

skills. Leaders have found thoughtful ways to make workload manageable and enhance staff wellbeing. Teachers at the early stages of their career particularly appreciate the collaborative culture among staff in the school. The school ensures that all stakeholders, including parents and pupils, feel valued.

Leaders have recently identified key aspects of the school's work to strengthen consistency. They recognise the importance of monitoring the impact of their actions and do so in many areas. There are some aspects of the school's work which would benefit from more thorough quality assurance.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Pupils experience a carefully constructed programme of lessons, assemblies and morning activities. Together, these cover the taught components of pupils' personal, social and health education. Through these activities, pupils develop a secure understanding of issues that concern them, including tolerance, respect for others and fundamental British values. All pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education. This includes learning about consent, sexual harassment and healthy relationships. They develop their understanding of risks, both on and offline. Students in the sixth form build on these foundations as they consider wider global affairs and increasingly mature themes.

The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities to pupils, including clubs such as sports, arts and technology. These opportunities broaden pupils' interests and understanding. Pupils benefit from educational visits linked to their learning. The school's careers programme gives pupils the confidence to make well-informed choices about what to study post-16 and beyond. This programme includes a range of external visitors and an annual careers fair. Further opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work are planned but are currently more limited. Some pupils receive additional tailored support to understand their options and prepare for further study and the world of work.

The school uses pupil premium funding to enable greater access for disadvantaged pupils to experience the wide range of activities available to pupils. This includes instrumental lessons, educational visits and the programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Leaders have started to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies in this area. They do not yet have a secure understanding of where their work is having the greatest impact for pupils and where there is more to do.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious post-16 curriculum which prepares students effectively for their next stage of education, training or employment. Learning is carefully sequenced so that students' knowledge and skills develop progressively over their 2 years of study. The school has recently made changes to increase student independence. These are beginning to have a positive impact on students' study habits.

Teachers are experts in the subjects they teach. They know their students well, monitor progress diligently and take action to keep them on track. As a result, students achieve suitable qualifications. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those

who are disadvantaged achieve as well as their peers. Students benefit from effective careers advice and guidance, which helps them to feel prepared for their next steps. Leaders have identified the need to provide more opportunities for high-quality work experience and have planned to address this.

Students have a positive attitude towards their studies; they attend well and are proud of their school community. Students behave with very high levels of maturity. They care about each other's wellbeing and are role models to younger pupils. Students take part in a range of clubs and societies that ignite their passions and introduce them to new interests.

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

This school has high ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Lessons provide an academic environment where staff encourage pupils to do their best. Passionate subject specialists teach a broad range of GCSE and post-16 subjects. Pupils who need additional support to access the learning in the classroom receive the help they need. As a result, all pupils achieve very well and are ready for their next steps.

The school has an expert team of trained professionals and mentors who work with pupils facing barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Dedicated spaces, such as the mentoring hub, further help to foster a sense of inclusion. Most pupils who are disadvantaged, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve highly.

The school's house system gives pupils a sense of belonging. Regular competitions, themed days and celebration events, coupled with the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, bring this diverse community together. The school's values, such as promoting harmony, are woven into the school curriculum and events calendar. This makes them a lived reality for pupils.

Pupils are happy here. They enjoy coming to school, and attendance is high. Pupils work hard in lessons and listen to their teachers. They learn the importance of respecting one another and put this into practice at social times. As a result, there is a sense of peace around the school. Bullying and discrimination are swiftly addressed. As a result, incidences are rare. Students in the sixth form are integrated into the wider life of the school. Sixth-form students relish the various opportunities to take on leadership roles and work with younger pupils, including charity projects and environmental initiatives. This encourages them to become confident leaders of the future.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff routinely identify and address pupils' gaps in knowledge and misconceptions.
 - Leaders should ensure that all pupils who follow a bespoke curriculum or pathway receive provision of the same quality and ambition as their peers.
 - Leaders should strengthen their oversight and analysis to more effectively evaluate the impact of their work in careers, pupil leadership and enrichment for disadvantaged groups of pupils.
 - Leaders should continue to develop and fully embed strategies for pupils in the sixth form to raise expectations and better prepare students for their next steps.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Mill Hill County High School trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jill Hamilton.

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 headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with representatives of the local governing body and the chair of trustees.

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.

The school makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Andy Stainton

Lead inspector:

Annabel Davies, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Simon Conway, His Majesty's Inspector

Hannah Glossop, His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Saunders, His Majesty's Inspector

Sam Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 11 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,651

Well 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

1,538

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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

25.52%

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

4.24%

Above 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

2.24%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	75.3%	45.2%	Above
2023/24	67.2%	45.9%	Above
2022/23	73.0%	45.3%	Above

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	61.0	45.9	Above
2023/24	57.5	45.9	Above
2022/23	61.8	46.3	Above

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	0.24	-0.03	Above
2022/23	0.52	-0.03	Above
2021/22	0.52	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' 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	50.9%	25.6%	Above
2023/24	38.1%	25.8%	Above
2022/23	50.0%	25.2%	Above

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	50.2	34.9	Above
2023/24	39.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23	51.9	35.0	Above

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	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23	0.13	-0.57	Above
2021/22	-0.34	-0.55	Close to average

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	50.9%	52.8%	-1.9 pp
2023/24	38.1%	53.1%	-15.0 pp
2022/23	50.0%	52.4%	-2.4 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	50.2	50.3	-0.1
2023/24	39.5	50.0	-10.5
2022/23	51.9	50.3	1.6

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	-0.72	0.16	-0.88
2022/23	0.13	0.17	-0.04
2021/22	-0.34	0.15	-0.50

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
2022 leavers	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers	96%	94%	Average
2020 leavers	97%	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
2023/24	35.01	34.38	Close to average
2022/23	35.99	34.16	Close to average
2021/22	40.83	37.86	Close to average

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
2023/24	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 (1 term)	4.9%	7.7%	Below
2023/24	6.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23	6.3%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	12.1%	21.1%	Below
2023/24	16.2%	25.6%	Below
2022/23	15.7%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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