

Copperfield Academy

Address: Dover Road East, DA11 0RB

Unique reference number (URN): 139685

Inspection report: 2 December 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils thrive in the school's highly positive culture of mutual respect. They demonstrate impressive self-discipline and pride in their conduct. Leaders keep rigorous behaviour records, and staff apply a consistent, well-embedded approach. Staff receive expert training and support. This ensures high expectations for behaviour and care across the school.

Pupils actively help to resolve disagreements. They handle most issues well, especially with support from peer mediators. Their attitudes to learning are highly aspirational and resilient. Classrooms maintain a calm, purposeful atmosphere, which pupils say helps them concentrate, achieve and enjoy lessons. Pupils confirm that bullying and prejudicial language are never tolerated. They understand these issues and why they are unacceptable. Playtimes are lively and welcoming. Pupils invite newcomers, support those learning language skills, and truly care for one another. Staff integrate and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with complex needs, well throughout the school.

Attendance remains consistently high. Leaders provide highly effective support for pupils facing barriers. Staff provide focused mentoring for these pupils and their families. This leads to lasting improvements. As a result, fewer disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent compared to the national figure.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils achieve well and make consistent progress through the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, many pupils master the fundamental skills they need to succeed in national tests and prepare for secondary school. Pupils with any disadvantage and those with lower starting points often perform as well as their peers nationally. The majority read fluently, write skilfully and calculate accurately. Pupils gain key knowledge from the broader curriculum. However, they do not always apply spelling and grammar skills consistently in subjects outside of English lessons. When they miss these opportunities for extra practice, some, especially disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve well in grammar, punctuation, and spelling assessments at the end of Year 6.

Children start their learning journey in early years with purpose. They build strong early reading and mathematical skills. Pupils strengthen these skills throughout Key Stage 1. They become fluent, accurate readers. This is reflected in phonics screening outcomes that match national averages. In the multiplication check in Year 4 published outcomes do not fully reflect pupils' achievement over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders carefully plan and sequence knowledge and skills in all subjects. Leaders check how the curriculum supports pupils to build on prior learning and prepare for the next stage of education. Staff have a strong understanding of the curriculum. They have the subject knowledge they need because leaders provide timely training and coaching. As a result, teaching is effective.

Teachers use their expertise and a wide range of tailored interventions and resources to help pupils learn and overcome barriers. For example, the consistent use of colour-coded word classes across the school. Pupils who are developing their English language skills use these effectively to express complex ideas. This ensures all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, access the full curriculum and build speaking and writing skills.

Reading is a strength of the school. Staff effectively teach pupils their letters and sounds. Staff identify gaps in learning quickly and provide accurate feedback and targeted support to close these gaps. Leaders also prioritise writing and mathematics. Teachers provide structured opportunities to apply these skills across most subjects. Early morning teaching sessions are impactful, giving extra time and support to those that need it most.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children establish secure foundations in the early years that ensure their future success. Leaders have designed a well-defined curriculum that spans Nursery and Reception classes. They clearly identify and sequence knowledge and skills. Children encounter a rich, well-chosen vocabulary and build effective language skills that support their interactions with peers and adults. Adults generally reinforce these language choices well through stories, rhymes, and songs. They carry this into phonics lessons, where children learn letters and sounds consistently well. Occasionally, adults lack the expertise to maximise learning during free-choice activities. This means that some children do not learn all that they could. Leaders recognise this, and there is a clear professional development programme to train and support staff.

In Nursery, staff provide support that accurately reflects pupils' age and stage. As a result, pupils achieve well and establish firm foundations in personal and academic skills. Children's transition into and out of the early years is managed effectively. Leaders identify additional needs or barriers to learning swiftly. As a result, they adapt provision promptly. Leaders also ensure that learning environments are stimulating and rich in resources, encouraging curiosity and independence. They work closely with families to share strategies that support learning at home. This collaborative approach helps children feel secure and confident as they progress through the early years.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify each pupil's needs. This begins with clear transition arrangements in early years that sensitively and effectively integrate pupils into Nursery and Reception. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, have special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or are known to children's social care. They supportively work with families and professionals to create personalised plans that raise aspirations and remove barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders make reasonable adjustments and use inclusive practices so pupils can succeed. For example, visual aids and alternative communication strategies help pupils in the specially resourced provision join playtimes with their peers.

Staff effectively follow the graduated approach because leaders provide timely, high-quality training. Leaders, including governors, check pupils' progress carefully. They rigorously review the impact of interventions and how additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used. They adapt support when needed. Leaders work with external agencies to secure effective provision for pupils in care.

Governors monitor the use of pupil premium funding and SEND duties to make sure resources improve outcomes. Staff use clear systems to support inclusion and create consistent classroom routines. Families feel listened to and supported. This strengthens partnerships and helps pupils achieve and thrive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels share a drive and passion for the school's mission. Governors and trustees embrace the school's vision and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They monitor resources and strategic plans closely. They offer robust challenge and support that leads to sustained improvements. Leaders articulate clear priorities and identify areas for development. They take decisions that are firmly in the best interests of pupils. They are particularly focused on those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to children's social care or facing barriers to learning and wellbeing. Consequently, the impact of their actions is broadly apparent for these groups across the school. The school relentlessly pursues the best educational offer for pupils while balancing this with a strong commitment to staff wellbeing.

Leaders ensure all staff access a high-quality professional development programme. Support staff receive an equally ambitious offer that is largely effective. Leaders use an evidence-informed approach to ensure that they sustain and coherently deliver this offer. The school fosters a close sense of community and shared purpose. Leaders work effectively with parents, external agencies and social care professionals to strengthen support for vulnerable pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Leaders carefully consider the school's context when making decisions about pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils access a broad range of clubs and trips. Staff offer bespoke clubs to pupils who face barriers to attendance, reflecting their individual talents and interests. Leaders take a cohesive and well-considered approach to supporting pupils' physical and mental wellbeing. Pupils show deep knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline.

The school delivers a comprehensive programme that teaches tolerance, equality, and positive participation in the local community. Pupils understand and apply concepts of kindness and fairness in relation to differences in others. They work closely with local community policing programmes, which are innovative and influential. This partnership helps change local views of services for pupils and their families. Leaders embed this work from the early years and sustain it throughout the school. Pupils benefit from a consistently well-taught personal, social, economic, and health curriculum. They know how these lessons prepare them for adulthood. This includes in their understanding of age-appropriate changes in themselves and others, as well as online safety.

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

Pupils flourish at this school. They take part in a rich personal development programme that builds confidence, leadership and ambition. Pupils, including those facing disadvantage, meet role models from a wide range of professional careers. This helps shape their future aspirations. They take pride in their school, form strong relationships and consistently live by the school's values. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school and life beyond. Work with the local police makes a particularly positive impact in the community. Pupils enjoy learning, and value experiences that reflect their diverse experiences and cultures.

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and strive to contribute meaningfully to their community. They feel safe, cared for and included from the start of the day. Staff build positive relationships and set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils succeed in a calm, orderly atmosphere. They have no concerns about bullying and trust adults to resolve any issues quickly. Pupils manage playtime activities, such as the competitive four-square league, with maturity and fairness. They attend school eagerly and regularly because they want to, not just because they have to.

Pupils achieve well. Their learning gives them the core skills and knowledge they need for the next stage of education. Pupils demonstrate this through achieving well in most areas by the end of Year 6. Those who speak English as an additional language develop vocabulary and oracy skills effectively. From their earliest days in Nursery, children show positive attitudes to learning and a love of reading and rhymes. Staff provide extra help for pupils who need it, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This well planned and tailored support helps pupils thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure staff in early years build expert knowledge to help them further improve children's access to outdoor learning.
 - Leaders should refine their approach to teaching spelling and grammar across the curriculum so that it fully reflects and further supports pupils' achievement in writing.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Reach2 Academy 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), Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body and the trust as well as a representative of the CEO.

Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes a 20 place specially resourced provision for pupils with autism.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher : Ben Clark

Lead inspector:

Toby Martlew, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz McIntosh, Ofsted Inspector

Emma Law, Ofsted Inspector

Kate Fripp, His Majesty's Inspector

Gareth Flemington, 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 2 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

466

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: 272

School capacity

480

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

42.62%

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: 26.3%

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

6.22%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.44%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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)

Resourced provision

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

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	59%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	72%	62%	Above
2023/24	69%	61%	Above
2022/23	38%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	78%	74%	Close to average
2022/23	55%	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	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	80%	72%	Above
2023/24	80%	72%	Above
2022/23	58%	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	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	71%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	46%	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	42%	46%	Close to average
2024/25	61%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	50%	46%	Close to average
2022/23	18%	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	55%	62%	Close to average
2024/25	68%	63%	Close to average
2023/24	59%	62%	Close to average
2022/23	39%	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	55%	59%	Close to average
2024/25	71%	59%	Above
2023/24	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23	32%	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	49%	60%	Below
2024/25	71%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23	25%	59%	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 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	42%	68%	-25 pp
2024/25	61%	69%	-9 pp
2023/24	50%	67%	-17 pp
2022/23	18%	66%	-48 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	55%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25	68%	81%	-13 pp
2023/24	59%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23	39%	78%	-39 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	55%	78%	-23 pp
2024/25	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24	64%	78%	-14 pp
2022/23	32%	77%	-45 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	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24	50%	79%	-29 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	25%	79%	-54 pp

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)	7.7%	5.1%	Above
2023/24	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	7.6%	5.9%	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 (1 term)	29.1%	14.3%	Above
2023/24	15.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	24.6%	16.2%	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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