

Shinewater Primary School

Address: Milfoil Drive, Langney, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 8ED

Unique reference number (URN): 144662

Inspection report: 16 June 2026

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

✓ Safeguarding standards met

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

How we evaluate safeguarding

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

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

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are known or previously known to children's social care and those who face other barriers to learning. Leaders know pupils and their families well. They are passionate about securing the best possible outcomes for them. Staff receive high-quality training on how best to support pupils with additional needs and so remove barriers to their learning and wellbeing.

The early identification of pupils' needs is a priority. Leaders have established effective systems to assess pupils' academic progress and welfare. These systems enable leaders to quickly identify pupils' needs and ensure that targeted support is put into place. Pupils with SEND receive high levels of support, and their progress is tracked carefully. As a result, pupils with SEND and those with other barriers to their learning make good progress from their starting points. Leaders recognise the challenges posed by high levels of pupil mobility and work hard to counteract this. A strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics, together with careful tracking of these pupils' progress, enables them to catch up quickly and be ready for the next stage of their education.

Leaders also work with a range of external professionals and agencies to address specific barriers faced by some pupils, including pupils who have struggled to attend school elsewhere. They work with parents and carers to ensure that support plans reflect pupils' needs and aspirations. Leaders monitor pupils' progress and review the impact of interventions. Well-informed use of pupil premium funding helps to reduce barriers for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly effective personal development programme that gives pupils meaningful experiences of the wider world. The 'mini police' initiative, supported by a police community support officer, helps pupils understand life beyond school and builds their confidence in engaging with their community. This sits alongside a relationships and health education curriculum that is taught sensitively. Pupils learn deeply about healthy relationships, consent, body changes and how to stay safe online and offline. They talk confidently about their physical and mental health and know what to do if they need help. They also learn about other risks, such as road safety. Leaders adopt a 'right support at the right time' approach, reflecting carefully on its impact and adapting it when needed.

The school's pastoral provision is highly effective. Leaders provide many therapeutic and enrichment opportunities that support pupils' wellbeing. Gardening, outdoor learning and sport contribute positively to pupils' development, and the school fosters a strong sense of belonging. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, feel valued and supported. Daily routines, group activities and leadership roles help pupils develop robust social skills. They work together, solve problems and support one another. Pupils take part in democratic activities, such as voting for pupils to be part of the communication team and choosing playtime equipment. This helps pupils understand that their voices matter.

In assemblies, pupils discuss real-life questions, including with regard to fairness and kindness. They learn to respect people with different families, cultures or religions. Through the school's programme, they build social skills and learn to resolve small disagreements.

A wide range of clubs and trips, including sports and arts, ensures all pupils benefit from rich experiences. Leaders track participation to ensure everyone can take part, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They identify pupils with talents and guide parents to wider opportunities. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children in the early years make rapid progress from their starting points, particularly in communication and writing. Pupils build increasingly secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics as they progress through the school. This allows them to achieve well over time.

Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care make good progress from their starting points. This is because teaching builds on the knowledge and skills they already have. Leaders track carefully how well pupils are doing and act quickly when help is needed.

Most pupils learn the reading, writing and number skills expected for their age. They are confident, fluent readers who can use their phonics knowledge to tackle new words because books are well matched to pupils' reading levels.

Pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly. Their writing in subjects such as science and personal, social and health education shows the same care and effort seen in their English books. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils, is close to national averages. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders monitor patterns and trends in attendance data. As a result, they have a clear understanding of the reasons behind any pupil absence. They have put appropriate strategies in place to help remove any barriers that may impact on pupils attending school regularly. Leaders take swift action to support pupils who are persistently absent to improve their attendance. Because of leaders' sustained efforts, pupils' attendance has continued to improve over time.

The behaviour policy was recently adapted to meet the changing needs of the school. Staff consistently follow the school's behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour. They support pupils to reflect on and manage their own emotions and to consider the feelings of others. As a result, the school is a calm place where pupils feel respected. They know that staff will

address any instances of bullying quickly and effectively. Discrimination, harassment and any form of abuse or violence, including online, are not tolerated. Disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils know that staff care for them. Leaders have established effective strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include tailored provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. This helps pupils to feel secure and positive about school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The broad and balanced curriculum prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. Across all subjects, content is sequenced well and organised logically. It builds on what pupils have already learned. Pupils who have not secured the necessary foundational knowledge are supported to catch up quickly.

The curriculum is generally well implemented. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Specialists from the trust help develop teachers' expertise. The school has a high number of pupils who start at different ages. Leaders provide effective training so teachers can teach key knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures these pupils can catch up when required. Staff use assessment well. Through regular checks, they identify gaps in pupils' learning and then adapt their teaching to address these gaps effectively.

Leaders have rightly placed a strong emphasis on reading, writing, communication and language. These areas of the curriculum are well taught. Pupils are taught to read using systematic phonics teaching and read books that are well matched to what they know. As a result, they soon become fluent readers.

Leaders make sure that staff adapt teaching appropriately for all pupils, including those with barriers to their learning and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When pupils find learning difficult, staff provide targeted support to help them catch up and keep up with their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the Nursery get off to a flying start. Interactions between staff and children are purposeful. These help children to quickly develop their vocabulary. Staff model language clearly and encourage children to use full sentences in discussion and play. As a result, children become increasingly confident in speaking and listening. Adults build on children's ideas and introduce new words during daily routines and activities. Staff provide care that helps children to feel safe, happy and ready to learn.

Reading is prioritised from the very start. Leaders ensure that teachers are well trained in teaching phonics. Children are keen to learn new sounds and blend these as they learn to read. As a result, children develop secure foundations in reading and writing, ready for the next stage in their learning.

The curriculum is carefully planned across the 7 areas of learning. Children build their knowledge and skills over time and happily recall what they have learned before. Staff help

children to make healthy choices and support their emotional and physical development. Children learn how to keep themselves safe and develop confidence through well-planned activities and opportunities to explore.

Leaders identify any additional needs early. They put the right support in place for children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to overcome any barriers that they may have. This helps children to learn alongside their friends and prepares them well for Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and the trust are ambitious for the school. They put pupils first and understand the context of the school and the challenges this presents. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged at the forefront of what they do. This helps to remove barriers to learning and improve pupils' experiences.

Governors and trust leaders know their statutory duties well. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Together with school leaders, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement. Governors oversee the use of additional funding and check that it is used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Collaboration is central to the way leaders, governors and the trust work. They build effective relationships with parents, the local community and a range of partners. They seek advice, support and challenge from others to strengthen the school's work and improve opportunities for pupils.

Leaders make professional development a priority. Staff benefit from high-quality training that strengthens their expertise. Leaders use trust support and external professionals to evaluate the impact of their work and identify where further improvements are needed. They also place a strong emphasis on staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff value this support, feel appreciated and speak positively about working at the school.

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

Shinewater Primary School is a place where 'everyone belongs'. Pupils enjoy being part of this friendly and welcoming school. They arrive at school eager to start the day. Leaders work closely with families to encourage regular attendance. Staff build positive relationships with children and families. As a result, pupils feel safe and know that adults care about them. They know whom to talk to if they are worried about something. Pupils state that bullying happens sometimes but gets resolved quickly. There is a calm atmosphere around the school because pupils know the routines and behave well. They treat each other with kindness and respect.

Leaders have created a culture that is inclusive for all. Staff have a clear understanding of individual needs. They use successful strategies that ensure pupils overcome any challenges that they may face. Pupils are supported to grow in confidence and maturity.

Parents and carers feel that the school has 'such a good culture towards the wellbeing and education of the children'. Leaders have designed a well-taught curriculum that supports pupils to typically achieve well.

A wide range of opportunities enrich school life. Clubs such as Wildlife Warriors, netball, athletics and craft club are well attended. Pupils speak enthusiastically about trips, residential visits and visitors who help them learn more about the local area. Roles such as play leaders and sports leaders enable pupils to take on responsibilities. They value the chance to help others and make a positive contribution to the school.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'learning adventures' that make lessons memorable. Staff quickly spot pupils who need extra help and make sure they receive the support they need. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities, to learn successfully alongside their classmates and make good progress from their starting points. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in computing and sport and take part in a broad range of experiences that help them to develop their knowledge and skills from the start. By the time they leave the school, pupils are ready for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed highly effective teaching across the school so all pupils consistently develop their language and vocabulary and become increasingly fluent readers.
 - Leaders should ensure that attendance continues to improve, particularly for vulnerable pupils, so that fewer pupils miss days at school and the number of pupils who are persistently absent reduces further.
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About this inspection

The school is part of The Swale Academies Trust, which means that other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Michael Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Goodson. The chair of governors is Patricia Metham.

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, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and other staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with trustees and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with the trust's school improvement partner, the trust's primary director and the CEO.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school's nursery provision is registered to admit children from 2 years old.

The school uses no alternative provision.

The school manages a breakfast and after-school club.

Headteacher: Helen Evason

Lead inspector:

Ulric Neblett-Leigh, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Vanessa Hickey, Ofsted Inspector

Claire Martin-O'Donoghue, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Platt, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

419

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

450

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)

45.69%

Well 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

3.10%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.58%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40%	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	68%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	74%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

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	52%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	41%	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	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

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	34%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	32%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	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	62%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	60%	Close to average

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	40%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	39%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	31%	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	55%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	59%	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 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	34%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (final)	32%	69%	-37 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	67%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	66%	-36 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	62%	80%	-18 pp
2024/25 (final)	61%	81%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	78%	-13 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	40%	78%	-38 pp
2024/25 (final)	39%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	78%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	77%	-47 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 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 (3 term)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.9%	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 (3 term)	21.4%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	24.2%	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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