

West Hill Primary Academy

Address: Dartford Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 3DZ

Unique reference number (URN): 144668

Inspection report: 20 January 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils are extremely well supported in their personal development. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of how to live a healthy life and how to stay safe. This knowledge builds appropriately as pupils move through the school, allowing them to be alert to online and offline risks relevant to their age. From the early years upwards, pupils learn about the importance of fairness and equality. They are highly respectful of one another's differences, recognising diversity as something to celebrate. Pupils are reflective and considerate when sharing their views. They form opinions on a range of ethical issues through structured experiences and discussions.

Pupils show a strong sense of character. They seek to be independent and are highly resilient in the face of challenge. Pupils welcome the opportunity to take on leadership roles in order to give back to their community. For example, older pupils lead a 'sunshine club' for younger pupils who struggle to come into school. Pupils welcome their younger peers to the club, organise fun activities and support them to feel more positive about school. Pupils recognise that their voices matter and are listened to by staff. Pupil leaders are proud of important improvements they have influenced in the school, such as meal choices and sports clubs.

The school provides pupils with a wide set of experiences that broaden their creative and cultural awareness. Pupils visit castles, museums and local landmarks. They participate in a range of workshops that bring learning to life. Older pupils benefit from the opportunity to visit a foreign country on an annual overseas trip. Leaders ensure that the range of clubs on offer reflects the needs of pupils. As a result, there are bespoke activities offered to disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that pupils who may have missed out on important opportunities or experiences previously have the chance to explore their talents and interests at school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well in the school. They read fluently and confidently. Pupils communicate well. They can justify and explain their thinking clearly. Pupils are able to apply their mathematical knowledge confidently to new learning. Typically, pupils write with increasing accuracy and detail over time. Occasionally, inaccuracies in letter formation are not picked up as effectively as they could be. This sometimes results in repeated misconceptions or less fluid handwriting as pupils move through the school.

Leaders have a clear understanding of where pupils require additional support to close gaps in their learning. They address this swiftly and appropriately. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make positive progress from their

starting points. Pupils achieve secure outcomes in their key stage 2 national tests. They are well prepared for the next stages in their learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils and families understand that it is important to attend school regularly. The school is a welcoming and happy environment. As a result, the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and enthusiastically. A small proportion of pupils, including some who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), miss a lot of school. Leaders are taking effective action to address this. They recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have very high expectations for behaviour, which pupils readily align to. Pupils consistently make positive choices in how they conduct themselves. There is a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Staff develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils. This ensures that pupils feel safe and very well supported. Pupils with barriers to their wellbeing, including some pupils with SEND, are supported effectively to manage their behaviour and emotions safely. Pupils routinely treat one another with kindness, acceptance and respect. As a result, incidents of bullying or discrimination are extremely rare and never tolerated. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They participate enthusiastically in all aspects of school life.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Pupils learn a range of subjects that prepare them well for the next stages of their education. Teachers revisit learning at regular intervals to ensure that pupils have remembered important knowledge. This helps pupils to build up their learning over time.

Teachers know their subjects well. They help bring learning to life through a range of engaging activity choices. Teachers understand the range of barriers pupils may experience and use this knowledge to adapt their teaching. Typically, this enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to access the learning well. At times, teaching choices are not as closely matched to pupils' starting points and needs as they could be. Leaders have a clear understanding of where teaching is less secure. They support staff in developing further expertise where this is needed.

Leaders recognise the importance of developing secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff check carefully to identify where pupils need additional help to develop these important skills. Pupils receive effective support if they need to catch up. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their writing and communication skills across the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for all children to receive the best possible start to school and their education. They have designed a curriculum that supports children to develop firm foundations in their language and communication. Leaders ensure that children who arrive with barriers to their learning or development have their needs identified swiftly. This allows

effective support to be put in place from the start. Staff ensure that there is effective partnership working with parents and carers. This begins before children start in Reception Year to ensure an effective transition for young children.

Reading is prioritised. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they arrive in Reception. Teaching is effective, ensuring that children progress well from their starting points. Children are well supported in their personal, social and emotional development. They learn to take turns, listen to others and behave well. Children play and learn together cooperatively. They enjoy taking part in the range of learning activities available to them. Staff generally support children well in their interactions. They encourage children to develop their vocabulary and express their ideas. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning and development in key stage 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. This allows them to provide pupils with prompt and effective support. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and ensure that any barriers to achievement or wellbeing are removed swiftly and effectively. They ensure that all pupils, regardless of their context or starting point, are enabled to succeed in school.

Leaders regularly and accurately check how well extra help and support are working for pupils. This allows staff to put tailored support in place where needed so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils can be successful in their learning. Staff usually adapt the curriculum well to meet pupils' needs. Leaders are aware of where staff need to strengthen their expertise to make these adaptations even more precise.

Leaders build positive relationships with families and professionals so that coordinated support can be provided for pupils with additional needs or barriers. They ensure specialist support is provided in a timely way. Leaders make effective use of additional funding. This ensures disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders collaborate effectively with the local authority to provide effective support for children in care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve highly and be ready for their next steps. Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths, which they are proud to celebrate. Leaders clearly and accurately identify where provision could be further improved. They act on these priorities swiftly and appropriately.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are committed to ensuring that every pupil feels valued and included. They routinely act in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Leaders at all levels understand the context of the school well. They ensure that all decision-making reflects the changing needs of pupils.

Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise needed to fulfil their roles. They provide helpful professional learning opportunities, which are valued by staff. Leaders reflect openly when further support is needed to make improvements in teaching or to the school's wider work.

They are deliberately mindful of workload and wellbeing when making these improvements. As a result, staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school.

Trustees and those responsible for governance are knowledgeable in their roles. They have the expertise to fulfil their statutory duties and to hold the school to account effectively for its performance. They do this well.

Leaders work in effective partnership with parents and carers. This helps to ensure pupils' needs are understood and met. Parents are very positive about their children's experiences in the school.

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

Pupils are happy in this welcoming school. They are safe. They understand well how to keep themselves safe beyond the school environment. Staff know pupils well and understand their individual needs. Staff start to build positive relationships with pupils before they arrive in the early years. As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop courteous and kind relationships with staff and each other.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to school and enjoy learning. Most attend school regularly. Pupils participate well in lessons and take pride in their work. Staff provide effective support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils typically achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils develop particularly secure foundations in reading and mathematics.

Pupils behave in an exemplary manner. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils consistently show the school's values of respect, responsibility and equality. They celebrate differences and take a keen interest in learning about other cultures and traditions. Pupils enjoy the many leadership opportunities available to them. They are confident and articulate when leading assemblies or acting as reading buddies. Pupils who have responsibility for championing equality actively promote the school's ethos among their peers. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They know how to resolve conflict and listen respectfully to other perspectives. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They also take seriously their responsibility to care for the world around them.

Pupils value the range of opportunities they have to widen their experiences. Leaders ensure that the enrichment offer meets pupils' needs. Staff effectively remove any barriers to pupils taking part so that disadvantaged pupils benefit well from the clubs, activities and trips on offer.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed improvements in how well the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders should continue to adapt and refine their approaches to reducing persistent

absence rates among disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Golden Thread Alliance, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Garry Ratcliffe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Vander Gucht.

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 school leadership team, members of staff, groups of pupils, representatives from the board of trustees, representatives from the local governing body and trust leaders during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Katy Ward

Lead inspector:

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lesley Fisher-Pink, Ofsted Inspector

Sam French, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Rivers, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

520

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

507

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)

16.73%

Below 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

2.69%

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

9.23%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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

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	67%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	60%	Above

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	83%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

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	80%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	57%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	53%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	56%	44%	Close to average

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	80%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	82%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	60%	Above

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	66%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	58%	Above

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	68%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	57%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	53%	69%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	67%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	66%	-11 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	80%	80%	0 pp
2024/25 (revised)	87%	81%	6 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	80%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	72%	78%	-6 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	66%	78%	-12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	72%	77%	-5 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	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	79%	-7 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	79%	-13 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 (2 term)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.2%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.8%	16.2%	Close to average

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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