

Graham School

Address: Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QW

Unique reference number (URN): 146769

Inspection report: 10 February 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.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that the broad, increasingly ambitious curriculum present at the last inspection is now better delivered. They have improved staff expertise to ensure that they model new learning effectively. Lessons have a shared structure that supports both staff and pupils well. Teachers introduce new learning clearly and check that pupils understand and build on their prior learning. Generally, teachers adjust the curriculum to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and address any misunderstandings effectively. Pupils are clear about what they need to learn and why. They are given opportunities to practise and revisit learning regularly. Pupils remember more and develop their understanding well in lessons.

Staff use information about pupils' needs to adapt the curriculum so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can access learning alongside their peers. The school accurately identifies those pupils who find reading hard. Staff provide personalised support, such as phonics, to ensure that pupils improve their reading as quickly as possible.

Teachers typically deliver the intended curriculum well and have suitable knowledge of the subjects they teach. On occasions, the curriculum is not taught as well as intended. When this happens, pupils find it hard to engage with parts of the curriculum. Consequently, some pupils do not develop their understanding of vocabulary to support their written and spoken language.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have fostered an inclusive culture, which threads through all areas of the school. They use their knowledge of pupils' needs to ensure that they get the right support at the right time. The school works closely with external agencies, including the local authority, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.

Overall, the school's work identifies the needs of pupils well. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff across the school know their pupils well. They receive appropriate training on how to identify when pupils may have additional learning needs. Teaching is generally adapted effectively for pupils with SEND and those pupils with other barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Recent developments, such as the intervention centre and its array of adjustments for pupils, support pupils to maintain or rebuild their effective engagement with education. For example, some pupils' attendance has significantly improved. Other pupils have been enabled to settle securely into school life.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding. Their choices, and recently improved analysis, help to improve the education and wider personal development of disadvantaged pupils. The school uses alternative provision appropriately. Leaders carefully ensure that this provision is suitable for pupils and in their best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders makes decisions in the best interests of pupils. Trustees and governors have a secure understanding of the school and the progress it has made since the previous inspection. They ensure that appropriate support and challenge are in place. The trust's oversight helps sustain momentum and ensures that leaders are well supported. Leaders at all levels, including staff across the trust, contribute to the school's vision and values being actively lived out by all.

Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's many strengths, such as the improvements to behaviour, curriculum and teaching. They track the quality of provision to carefully check how well their actions improve standards for pupils. Leaders are realistic. They recognise the important and connected areas, where the school needs to improve, particularly attendance and the impact on pupils' outcomes. While there are well-considered intentions to embed improvements that are underway, leaders recognise that there is more to do so that pupils' attendance increases and that, consequently, they achieve more highly.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and value the learning opportunities provided. They receive high-quality training to carry out their roles, including their work to keep pupils safe. This professional learning continues to improve the quality and teaching of the curriculum. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders for their wellbeing and workload and enjoy working at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils at Graham are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are proud to share the school values. Pupils learn the importance of how to treat each other as equals. They learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand about the characteristics, such as religions and beliefs, that are protected by law. They confidently discuss diversity, moral responsibility and respect. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding across a range of important topics. These include healthy relationships and consent. They have an appropriate understanding of fundamental British Values.

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate personal development curriculum. Pupils' learning from philosophy and ethics lessons is reinforced effectively through assemblies, form time themes and strong community partnerships. For example, it is enriched by visitors into school. Pupils consider important issues, such as how to protect personal information, recognise fake news and respond appropriately to unsafe situations. Leaders and staff ensure that they are able to react to local issues as they arise, be this to raise awareness of or promote positive mental health. Pupils value pastoral support highly. They describe staff as approachable and supportive. Pupils are confident that they can seek help from trusted staff when needed.

The school's careers education and guidance provision is a strength. Pupils value this and it is progressive and well structured. They enjoy work experience, as well as opportunities to engage with employers and universities. This comprehensive offer raises pupils' aspirations and informs their future options.

The school offers a broad enrichment programme, including trips, performances, sport and a range of clubs. Creative, practical and digital skills are nurtured through art, music, cooking and coding. The extra-curricular offer is inclusive. It features some pupil-led sessions, such as different gaming clubs, as well as other leadership opportunities. Pupils promote the positive culture in school through charitable fundraising and being anti-bullying ambassadors. Leaders ensure disadvantaged pupils benefit from all aspects of the personal development programme.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils have not achieved well in national examinations at the end of key stage 4. Pupils' achievement remains below that of their peers nationally. This is due to gaps in pupils' knowledge over time. This includes in some essential knowledge they need to succeed. Leaders' actions to address gaps in some pupils' foundational knowledge, such as reading, are ongoing and it is too early to see the full impact of this support.

Improvements to the quality of the curriculum and teaching mean that, in the main, pupils currently in the school make positive progress through the curriculum. Typically, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, build knowledge securely in each subject. Generally, pupils' written work is of a suitable quality across all year groups.

There are positive indications of improvement in pupils' outcomes in 2025, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have made great strides to ensure that pupils successfully progress to education, employment or training when they leave Year 11.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance is below national averages. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some systems introduced by leaders to support pupils to attend well are new. Consequently, the full impact of these approaches is not clearly evident. Leaders know that improving attendance remains a significant priority for the school. They work increasingly closely with pupils, parents and carers, to promote the importance of regular attendance and to provide support for pupils and families. Staff are very clear on the key role they play to promote high attendance. As a result, there have been some improvements seen.

Leaders have established clear and high expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves. Generally, pupils behave well, follow the agreed school routines and show positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms are typically calm and focused so that pupils can learn effectively. Staff and pupils have positive relationships. Staff provide pupils with effective support to meet their emotional needs and promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils want to succeed and enjoy the praise culture, which has gained strength considerably. They are increasingly proud to share their best work. Bullying and unkind

behaviour, including discrimination, are increasingly rare. Leaders deal with any instances of poor behaviour effectively.

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

Pupils are at the heart of all the work done at Graham School. They feel happy and safe. Staff know pupils well and act quickly, when guidance is required. Pupils typically receive timely and appropriate support and are confident that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively.

Achievement has not been high, although recent improvements help pupils develop firmer foundations for future success. Pupils enjoy learning and engage well in lessons. The curriculum is ambitious and generally taught well. Teaching builds carefully on what pupils already know. This helps them grasp more complex ideas. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from proactive help that enables them to access the full curriculum.

Behaviour across the school is calm and respectful. Pupils are polite to staff, visitors and each other. They understand the behaviour system and see it as fair and consistent. When pupils find it difficult to meet expectations, staff provide the support they need to improve. Positive relationships contribute to a welcoming and inclusive school culture, where pupils look out for one another.

Attendance remains a key challenge. Too many pupils do not attend regularly. Although the school has appropriate strategies in place, these have not yet had the desired impact. Irregular attendance leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge and affects their progress.

The school provides a high-quality personal development programme. Pupils access a wide range of enrichment activities, including performing arts, local visits and trips. Clubs such as gaming and various sports allow pupils to explore their interests. Leadership opportunities, including the school council and student-led initiatives, help pupils contribute to school life.

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. They meet a range of employers, colleges and universities through careers events. This helps them make informed choices about future education, employment or training. Pupils understand the school's values and speak knowledgeably about equality and the fundamental British Values.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop their work to ensure effective strategies are place to improve pupils' attendance.
- Leaders should intensify actions to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding to improve outcomes in public examinations, so that more pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 4.

- Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently develops pupils' spoken and written language across subjects.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Heartwood Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helen Winn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Lewis.

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 principal, vice principals and assistant vice principals during the inspection. They also spoke with trust leaders and trustees, including the chair, as well as the chair of the local governing body. Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and carers.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this school:

The school makes use of two alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

The principal was appointed to the position in September 2025.

Principal: Jonathan Newton

Lead inspector:

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Harkireet Sohel, Ofsted Inspector

Yvonne Bootman, Ofsted Inspector

Lyndsey Reed, His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Laidler, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

968

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,299

Close to 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

37.50%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

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

4.03%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

7.33%

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 (revised)	28.2%	45.4%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	28.4%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.8%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	38.3	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.1	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.4	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.53	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.42	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

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

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	11.7%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	14.1%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.1%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	30.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.0	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.7	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.15	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	-0.57	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 (revised)	11.7%	53.1%	-41.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	14.1%	53.1%	-39.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	23.1%	52.4%	-29.4 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 (revised)	30.1	50.4	-20.3
2023/24 (final)	25.0	50.0	-25.0
2022/23 (final)	30.7	50.3	-19.6

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 (final)	-1.15	0.16	-1.32
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	0.17	-0.85

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	90%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	87%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	88%	94%	Below

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)	12.9%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	14.1%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.2%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	39.6%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	45.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	41.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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