

Royal Rise Primary School

Address: Royal Rise, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2DQ

Unique reference number (URN): 144615

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.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

In the early years, purposeful interactions between staff and children help to develop children's language and vocabulary securely. Staff extend children's sentences using agreed approaches and model language with precision, including through rhymes and repeated rehearsal. Gentle correction is used when appropriate, such as prompting children to use sentence starters they have practised previously. Staff are alert to children who may find spoken language more difficult and provide well-targeted support that enables them to make progress. Phonics is prioritised and taught well. Regular checks on learning and consistent modelling, including in letter formation and pencil grip, ensure children secure accurate early reading and writing skills.

The early years curriculum is carefully sequenced. This helps children to build their knowledge and make excellent progress from their starting points. The environment is organised meaningfully so that independent activities reinforce key knowledge. Core skills are woven into daily routines. For example, through rhymes for days of the week and counting activities. Positive relationships with parents and carers ensure that staff know children's starting points. Staff use this information to plan effectively. Children are well prepared for Year 1 because staff work closely together to ensure that expectations, routines and early learning foundations are firmly embedded throughout the early years.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils develop their core skills in reading, writing and mathematics securely through the school. They apply their phonics knowledge confidently, which supports their typically accurate spelling. In mathematics, pupils show age-appropriate fluency and use practical resources well to strengthen their understanding. When gaps in knowledge appear, teachers provide targeted support to address them promptly.

At the end of key stage 2, attainment is broadly in line with national averages and improved in 2025. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers nationally became much smaller. Year 1 phonics outcomes remain consistently high over time.

These results mirror the positive learning seen in lessons and in pupils' discussions about their work. Pupils generally explain their learning confidently. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and demonstrate clear progression as they move through the school. However, some pupils' work in wider curriculum subjects is not always of the same quality as in core subjects. This is partly due to inconsistencies in pupils' handwriting skills.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance is now in line with national averages. Persistent absence has reduced significantly in recent years so that it is also broadly in line with national figures. These improvements reflect leaders' sustained actions over time, including their targeted use of additional funding. Despite this positive trend, leaders at both school and trust level continue to give attendance high priority. They recognise that some groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are more vulnerable to absence. Leaders monitor attendance closely and provide timely support, where concerns arise. The introduction of the school's family liaison officer has been particularly effective in helping some families to improve attendance.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They work cooperatively and show positive attitudes to learning. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff manage behaviour calmly and consistently. They support pupils effectively who need more help to manage their behaviour. This helps pupils to feel well cared for. Leaders think carefully about times of the school day that may be more challenging and put appropriate support in place. As a result, the start of the day and playtimes are well organised and run smoothly. Pupils respond well to these routines. Leaders track serious behaviour incidents, including bullying, closely. This helps them to spot emerging concerns. Leaders and staff address these through curriculum teaching and their work with families.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum has been thoughtfully shaped to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders keep a close eye on how it is taught and make purposeful decisions when refining it. For example, they draw on external expertise as they make changes to the way staff deliver the Year 1 curriculum.

Staff benefit from regular professional development. This secures their subject knowledge and supports consistent practice across the school. Teachers make meaningful connections between subjects. For example, in Year 5 computing, pupils use their learning from mathematics about multiplication and division skills to create spreadsheets that convert measures.

Pupils often revisit prior learning at the start of lessons. This helps them to build their understanding over time. Core skills in reading, number and early writing are introduced in a carefully planned sequence. Phonics is taught with consistency. Frequent checks in phonics lessons allow teachers to target support precisely. However, while a handwriting curriculum is in place, it is not implemented uniformly across year groups or subjects. This limits the opportunities some pupils have to develop these skills.

Staff typically check pupils' understanding effectively. Leaders track pupils' progress closely. This enables them to identify and respond swiftly to emerging gaps. In lessons, staff make well-judged adaptations so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can access the learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Pupils' needs are identified and understood well by staff. There are clear systems that track pupils' differing requirements. This helps leaders respond effectively to pupils who face barriers to their wellbeing, including those known or previously known to social care.

Leaders provide targeted support. They purposefully monitor and review academic outcomes as well as wider indicators, such as attendance. This ensures that a range of support is put in place, as appropriate, to meet the needs of pupils. The school's inclusive culture means that approaches, previously used for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now embedded across classrooms. This helps more pupils to access learning and manage their behaviour.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained to understand and meet pupils' needs. Training is tailored so that those who are new to the profession and those working with pupils with specific needs receive focused guidance. Staff know pupils well and adapt the curriculum as needed.

Staff work closely with parents and carers and with external agencies so that pupils receive prompt and effective support. Leaders use resources thoughtfully to achieve this. The school's use of additional funding has a positive impact on attendance and achievement for eligible pupils. Staff work with social care professionals to keep vulnerable pupils safe and to ensure that support is well coordinated.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those from the trust, know the school well. They understand what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They set clear reasons for their priorities and take suitable action to bring about improvement. Leaders are mindful of the school's context and the particular opportunities and challenges this brings. The trust is closely involved in the life of the school. Regular quality assurance visits give trust leaders ongoing oversight of how well key areas are being addressed.

The trust is currently making changes to its governance structure. Effective systems are in place to support these changes and to maintain trustees' accurate understanding of the school's performance and how it supports pupils. Governance fulfils its statutory duties effectively, ensuring that the school is monitored with care. The link trustee role provides an extra layer of scrutiny and challenge for leaders. Trustees remain aware of the importance of keeping community links. They ensure that stakeholder voice continues to inform decision-making.

Professional development is well planned and clearly linked to school priorities. Leaders respond to results of monitoring, such as in their work to improve consistency in teaching strategies. Staff access high-quality training that leads to improved teaching and career progression. There are also opportunities to work beyond the school with colleagues in other trust and local schools. Leaders in this school support improvement in other trust schools.

Leaders take appropriate steps to manage staff workload. Staff feel that leaders introduce new initiatives only when needed and value the support they receive. Parents and carers

generally describe the school as warm, welcoming and nurturing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a well-designed personal development offer that responds effectively to the needs of its pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have created a personal, social and health education curriculum that tackles specific barriers pupils may face. For example, themes such as financial literacy are taught through an engaging enterprise week that builds pupils' independence from the early years onwards. Each academic year begins with a focus on aspirations, supported by visits from a range of professionals that broaden pupils' understanding of future opportunities.

Pupils benefit from trips and clubs selected to widen their experiences. Leaders use additional funding to remove any barriers linked to cost and timing of these opportunities. Leaders carefully plan and monitor the Year 6 swimming provision to ensure that all pupils can swim before they leave the school.

The relationships and health education curriculum is also well structured. Staff communicate clearly with parents about what will be taught. Pupils talk confidently about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe, both in the real world and online. Leaders respond swiftly to emerging issues. For example, they provided tailored workshops on social media use and guidance to families through the family liaison officer.

Pupils understand different forms of bullying and describe practical strategies to manage conflict. They know how to seek help if needed. Pupils also use the school's well understood 'WITS' approach, which encourages them to walk away, ignore it, talk it through or seek help.

Pupils' character is developed well. They speak confidently about difference, inclusion and respect. Older pupils engage thoughtfully with challenging texts that deepen their understanding of diversity and fundamental British values. The school's partnership with a school in Malawi further broadens pupils' horizons. This helps them recognise that opportunities are not equal for children around the world, particularly in relation to access to education.

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

Pupils feel a clear sense of belonging at this school. Leaders think carefully about how to nurture constructive relationships throughout the school day. Staff greet pupils as they arrive. This helps pupils to start the day calmly and confidently. Pupils are supported well during social times. Year 6 playground buddies help younger pupils at breaktimes. This ensures that everyone has someone to play with and helps settle minor issues. Pupils value the school's 'GLAD' time at the end of each day as an opportunity to reflect and leave school feeling encouraged. This is paired with robust pastoral support for those who need additional help. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils are confident that staff deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. As a result, behaviour is consistently positive throughout the school day.

Older pupils contribute well to the school community. They speak proudly about the leadership roles available to them, including house captains, library monitors and ambassadors. Pupils feel that staff listen to them and take their views seriously. The new school council has enhanced pupil voice and has led to new clubs, such as gymnastics and boxing.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They say that teachers support them well and encourage them to ask questions during lessons. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained to remove any barriers that pupils face in their learning or wellbeing. Pupils know that extra help is available when needed. They also enjoy links with older pupils, who visit from a local secondary school, who read with them. In the early years, children develop learning behaviours, such as listening, perseverance and curiosity. These habits support the positive attitudes to learning seen across the school.

Pupils understand the importance of attendance and are motivated to attend regularly. As a result of leaders' focus, attendance is now in line with national averages and the number of pupils who miss school regularly has fallen.

Next steps

- Leaders should maintain a sharp focus on the attendance of key groups of pupils, including robust analysis of patterns and trends, to improve their attendance and reduce persistent absence.
 - Leaders should ensure that handwriting is taught consistently well across the school so that pupils develop accurate writing skills.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Cygnus Academies 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), Danielle Lewis-Egonu, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ryan Clifford.

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, other school leaders, trustees, the CEO and other trust leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with staff, parents and carers and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Katie Hancock, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Vanessa Mason, His Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon, 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

197

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: 272

School capacity

210

Below 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)

38.07%

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

0.00%

Well below 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

15.23%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	60%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

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	71%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	79%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	87%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	49%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	23%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	44%	Above

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	60%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	38%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	69%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	75%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	62%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	58%	Close to average

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	57%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	49%	68%	-19 pp
2024/25 (revised)	58%	69%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	23%	67%	-44 pp
2022/23 (final)	70%	66%	4 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	80%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	70%	78%	-8 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	69%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	78%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	70%	77%	-7 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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	79%	-41 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	70%	79%	-9 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)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.5%	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 (2 term)	14.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.7%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	27.0%	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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