

Sandgate Primary School

Address: Coolinge Lane, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 3QU

Unique reference number (URN): 118505

Inspection report: 24 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve consistently well over time in national assessments in all areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, multiplication tables and phonics. Pupils read fluently and confidently. Across year groups and key stages, pupils develop secure knowledge and skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. This enables them to access and make progress through the full curriculum. The work in pupils' books is of a consistently high quality. It demonstrates staff's and leaders' high expectations of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

Pupils develop detailed knowledge across all subjects. They recall important prior knowledge and current learning very well. Pupils apply subject-specific vocabulary with confidence. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a consequence of the targeted support they receive. Leaders act swiftly to identify and close gaps in learning. Pupils become confident and resilient. In every key stage, pupils are prepared very well for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a welcoming environment that encourages pupils to enjoy coming to school. Attendance is consistently above the national average. Leaders carefully check attendance figures and act to improve them if the figures dip. Leaders work closely with families to remove barriers and help pupils attend more regularly, if needed. Tailored strategies for individual pupils have improved attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils. Clear routines and consistent communication help pupils, staff and families to understand the school's expectations and maintain regular attendance over time.

Pupils develop positive attitudes, behave very well and are a credit to the school. They are polite, kind and cooperative. They show respect to staff, visitors and one another. Leaders set high expectations for behaviour and conduct from the very start. Pupils consistently meet these, showing self-discipline and consideration for others. They understand and follow clear routines and rules. This creates a calm and orderly environment. Behaviour during breaktimes is a celebration of pupils demonstrating the values of friendship, courtesy and respect. Inside, pupils settle quickly and focus on learning without distraction. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with any unkind behaviour quickly and sensitively. Staff know pupils well and provide thoughtful adjustments for pupils who need them.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a high-quality curriculum. It is informed by evidence and research, and continually refined. Leaders have an accurate and well-informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They ensure it meets the needs of all learners.

Teachers are knowledgeable about what to teach because they receive high-quality training. They use their secure subject knowledge to teach confidently and explain new concepts

clearly. Teachers check pupils' learning and address any errors or misconceptions that pupils may have. There are connections between year groups and subject areas. These help deepen pupils' understanding. The curriculum is further enriched through visits, to the local beach and museums, for example. As a result, pupils build knowledge securely as they move through the carefully sequenced curriculum.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to access the same curriculum. Staff expertly adapt teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to learning. This enables all pupils to access the curriculum at an appropriate level. The school supports pupils to quickly develop skills in the early stages of communication, language, early reading, writing and mathematics. Phonics is taught effectively. This leads to pupils becoming confident and fluent readers.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders across the school are knowledgeable about early years education. Their oversight of the early years is very effective and ensures a high level of consistency. Children enjoy learning through high-quality teaching and purposeful independent play. They make an excellent start to learning and school life.

The curriculum is ambitious and thoughtfully designed. Children's development in all areas of learning is well mapped. Staff are skilled practitioners who engage in purposeful interactions with children. They provide deliberate and effective opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and deepen their understanding. Children develop the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics from the very start. Reading is prioritised. Children learn age-appropriate reading and writing knowledge and skills, thanks to expert phonics teaching.

Partnerships with parents and carers are well established. Extra support is provided to support transitions for children with additional needs. This helps staff to identify and build on children's early knowledge and starting points quickly and robustly. Strong, respectful relationships are evident across the early years classrooms. Children are settled, and are increasingly independent and resilient. Staff consistently reinforce positive learning and social behaviours. This creates a happy environment where children thrive. Consequently, they are well prepared for key stage 1 and beyond.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders demonstrate a commitment to inclusion. It is at the forefront of their work and is highly successful. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers are ready to learn. They use additional funding effectively in this regard.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and supported to quickly and accurately identify pupils' needs. Staff get to know pupils and their families well. They know how to best support pupils, and provide effective, targeted support from the very start. In classrooms, teaching is adapted effectively and in response to pupils' changing needs. This enables all pupils to access the full curriculum and the wider enrichment offer.

Leaders implement a robust approach to checking pupils' progress and the impact of additional support. They make adjustments if needed. This supports all pupils to make strong progress from their starting points. Leaders are proactive in their work with parents and carers. They access guidance and support from external professionals swiftly. This further strengthens the offer for pupils.

Trained staff support pupils to talk about their feelings. This helps pupils navigate any challenges they may face. Leaders' decisions are informed by evidence and are deliberate. They support pupils to develop independence and emotional security.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and any areas for development. They constantly reflect on their priorities to ensure any actions they take are in the best interests of pupils. These actions are well researched and often informed by external expertise. Leaders ensure that there is consistency in expectations across subjects and classes. The focus is on building pupils' prior knowledge and readiness for the next stage of education.

Leaders demonstrate professionalism, a continued drive to ensure consistency and high aspirations for the whole school community. Pupils experience a highly positive experience across all aspects of school life. Staff benefit from high-quality training and feel well supported in their roles. Leaders prioritise staff's workload and wellbeing alongside their ambitious goals. This fosters a positive culture, where teaching strategies and adaptations for the needs of pupils are well understood and implemented.

Governors know the school community and local context well. They possess the necessary expertise to challenge and support leaders effectively. They understand and meet their statutory duties, such as overseeing safeguarding. Governors share leaders' ambition for pupils' academic success and personal development. They make significant contributions to school improvement, and there is a collaborative approach to leadership and governance.

The wider community is highly positive about the school's work. Leaders have created and sustained an ambitious and inclusive culture that prepares pupils well for future education and life in the wider world.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a coherent personal, social and health education programme. The programme considers in great depth the context of the school, recognising needs and barriers for individuals and groups. Leaders have chosen important elements to enrich the programme, for example their forest school. This has been prioritised to accelerate learning and improve wellbeing. 'Wild passports' record pupils' skill development and progress through the outdoor curriculum over their time at the school.

Pupils know that some of the things that make people different are protected by law, such as race, gender and disability. The curriculum helps pupils develop a deep understanding of fundamental British values. They become tolerant and respectful of the importance of law and democracy. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND), and those facing other barriers, learn about consent, healthy relationships and the risks they may face online and in the real world. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they feel unsafe.

Leaders ensure everything they do prepares pupils for later life. They consider the experiences of all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, in depth. This ensures that highly bespoke activities develop pupils' interests, talents and resilience. There is an extensive range of clubs available. Leaders carefully analyse which pupils access these and ensure all pupils have access to the full, wider offer, ensuring any barriers to attendance at clubs are removed. This helps all pupils experience new activities and develop new interests.

Character development is a particular strength. Pupils across the school take pride in their leadership roles as ambassadors for the school's values. Younger pupils aspire to have these roles. The school supports pupils to become active citizens who contribute to their community. This creates a strong sense of responsibility and belonging.

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

Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging at this welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils build positive, trusting relationships with staff. They know who to turn to for support if they need it. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with promptly if it arises. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils' behaviour is extremely positive. They demonstrate the school's values of courtesy, determination, respect, equality, compassion and friendship throughout the school day.

Pupils enjoy learning and speak about lessons with enthusiasm. The school environment is a celebration of their work. Pupils attend well, and benefit daily from a broad and enriching curriculum that equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive. Over time, pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, are fully supported and included in all aspects of school life. They progress very well as a result of leaders' determination to fulfil their vision that 'everyone deserves the taste of success'.

Pupils build and demonstrate their confidence, resilience, independence and teamwork skills through a rich array of activities. They engage enthusiastically in enrichment opportunities at clubs such as art, choir, a range of sports and cookery. Pupils take pride in helping to shape decision-making in the school. They enjoy supporting others as ambassadors for each of the school's values.

Pupils demonstrate strong social and moral understanding. They actively contribute to charitable causes and community projects, proud to make a positive difference. Pupils understand differences between people and show genuine tolerance and compassion towards others. They enjoy forest school and the range of visits to local museums, the theatre and an annual residential trip. These help pupils to enhance their understanding of the curriculum.

Overall, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school supports them to flourish as responsible citizens.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should sustain the effectiveness of their work and continue to refine and embed their identified priorities for improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Wayne Wills.

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 senior leaders, representatives from the governing body, the local authority and the school improvement partner during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

The school has been through a period of change since the last inspection. The interim acting headteacher has been in post since September 2025, supported by 2 deputy headteachers.

Headteacher and interim acting headteacher: Mr Matt Green and Mrs Lianne Jones

Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Margaret Coussins, Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Clarke, Ofsted Inspector

Sara Wakefield, 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 24 February 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

420

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)

12.89%

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

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

7.88%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	85%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	95%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	89%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	97%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	73%	Above

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	95%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	92%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	95%	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	93%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	73%	Above

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	67%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	42%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	81%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	58%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	100%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	85%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	91%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	85%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	100%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	67%	68%	-1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	69%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	91%	67%	23 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	81%	80%	2 pp
2024/25 (revised)	58%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	80%	20 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	85%	78%	7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	83%	78%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	91%	78%	13 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	85%	80%	5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	79%	21 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.5%	5.9%	Below

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)	5.5%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.8%	16.2%	Below

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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