

Roundwood Primary School

Address: Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 3AD

Unique reference number (URN): 117211

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 ●

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a broad and sequenced curriculum. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when. Staff are skilled at making sure that pupils remember what they learn. They routinely check what pupils have learned and adapt their teaching if needed. This, and the careful development of subject-specific vocabulary, means that pupils build a deep and secure body of knowledge over time. It provides pupils with what they need to secure important foundations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Staff identify gaps in learning quickly. They address these through targeted teaching. For example, teachers explain missed learning before pupils move on to new ideas. Pupils develop strong language and vocabulary skills. Teaching consistently develops pupils' spoken language and writing skills across subjects. Staff consistently address misconceptions, including those that are subject specific.

Carefully planned learning opportunities deepen pupils' interest and knowledge. For example, they complete science experiments and visit historical sites. These experiences bring learning to life and help pupils make meaningful connections across different subjects. Staff have strong subject knowledge because leaders provide high-quality, effective training. The focus is firmly on improving the quality of teaching.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development programme is sequenced well. Leaders adapt it skilfully to address pupils' current and future needs. For example, the school has made online safety a priority. Pupils understand how technology use can affect their wellbeing. Leaders support pupils to make informed choices about options that protect them from potential online risks. Leaders provide additional personal development, through individualised support, for some pupils who may be more vulnerable. This includes help from other agencies when needed.

The school teaches pupils how to think deeply about the world around them. Assemblies and class discussions encourage pupils to explore real life, age-appropriate situations. This begins in the early years. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of right and wrong. They also learn to make thoughtful and responsible choices. This approach strengthens pupils' characters extremely well. Pupils learn an appropriate relationships and health education programme. This helps them to understand and develop positive friendships. They are very well prepared for their next stage.

Older pupils have a strong understanding of world religions and key fundamental British values, such as tolerance to others. They understand democracy and can explain why this matters. Younger pupils learn this in age-appropriate ways. For example, they read stories with characters they can relate to who may be from a different religion. Pupils enjoy many cultural experiences, such as learning to play the steel drums.

The school has an extensive programme of trips, clubs and enrichment activities. These deepen pupils' understanding across the curriculum. Leaders track who attends these and make sure that all pupils have the chance to take part. Additional sporting and creative

events help pupils develop their talents and interests further. Many pupils contribute to the school community in groups, such as eco warriors and reading ambassadors. They take pride in their school and play an active role in both their school and the wider community.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Staff make sure that pupils gain the knowledge they need to learn across the curriculum. Teachers check for gaps in pupils' basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing. Skilled staff address these gaps, sometimes through targeted teaching. Over time, pupils catch up and achieve well in national tests. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers ensure that pupils produce high-quality work. They have high expectations and give clear guidance. As a result, pupils take pride in their learning and strive to improve their work over time.

Typically, pupils progress well through the curriculum. This includes pupils with lower starting points or additional challenges to learning, such as social, emotional and mental health needs. These needs can sometimes make it harder for pupils to focus on learning and they do not always achieve as well as they could. Through well-considered guidance, staff create an environment where pupils feel secure and equipped to be ready and able to learn.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Typically pupils attend well, including many who are disadvantaged. Leaders check on pupils' attendance rates. The school has recently increased its focus on attendance because a small number of pupils are persistently absent. The impact of this work has shown improvements for some pupils. Leaders are strengthening their actions in order to secure further, sustained improvement in attendance for all pupils.

Pupils behave well. They follow routines consistently. This includes the youngest children who listen carefully and join in confidently during lessons. Across the school, pupils show, through their sensible behaviour, that they are keen and ready to learn. Pupils say behaviour is good. They know who to speak to if they have any concerns, including about bullying, which is rare. Staff build strong relationships with pupils. They model the behaviour they expect. Pupils explain how staff help them sort out friendship challenges. As a result, pupils feel confident that staff will support them when issues arise.

Leaders monitor behaviour patterns carefully. They take a personalised approach to support pupils who find it harder to manage their behaviour. Leaders show a clear understanding of each pupil's needs and provide strategies that help pupils improve their behaviour over time.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of the children. Staff often draw on children's interests to engage them in carefully considered learning opportunities. The curriculum is logically sequenced. Staff use this information to teach children from their individual starting points. This develops their knowledge securely. Skilled staff develop children's language and communication skills. They model appropriate words and guide children to use them accurately. This helps children to extend their vocabulary and engage in meaningful conversations. For example, at snack time, staff talk to the pupils about the flavours in the different food options. Suitably trained staff teach phonics through well-structured sessions. This gives children the practise they need to recognise letter sounds and blend these together. Alongside this, children also learn to write the corresponding letters.

There are strong and trusting relationships between staff and children. This helps children to feel confident and ready to learn. Occasionally, a few children who need support, due to additional needs or other vulnerabilities, do not receive this as quickly as they could. Leaders oversight is not precise enough to identify and target these pupils swiftly enough. Typically, however, children are prepared well for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Teachers identify pupils' additional needs promptly and accurately. Leaders and staff know the pupils well. They use this knowledge to identify barriers for different groups. They work closely with parents and carers, so that everyone understands how best to help each child. Some pupils are given individual targets or adaptations to help them learn. For example, a child may need a visual timetable to help them follow routines. This allows staff to act quickly and remove barriers to learning. Staff take effective targeted actions, such as giving pupils additional reading sessions. Leaders check that pupils make appropriate progress towards their targets. The school has an inclusive culture. Effective staff training ensures that pupils receive appropriate help in class. Staff work well together to support pupils and build their independence.

Leaders target additional funding well. For example, they make sure that disadvantaged pupils can access the same or extra learning experiences. These activities match gaps in pupils' knowledge and develop key skills. Leaders also work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help that they need to progress. This ensures that the school has a wide range of strategies they can use so that pupils are able to keep up and catch up, academically and socially.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious and dedicated to making decisions in the best interest of the pupils. This shows in the priorities they set and the actions they take. Leaders continue to build on the school's strengths. They have high expectations about what pupils learn, both academically and personally. Leaders strive to maintain high standards in the quality of pupils' work. They ensure that staff have what they need to teach well. Leaders' focus is on

further improving outcomes for all pupils. This includes increasing the numbers of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years.

Leaders provide targeted professional learning that builds staff knowledge and skills. Effective training leads to consistent approaches to teaching. Staff value this training and can explain how it improves teaching and benefits pupils.

Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding. For example, they check that the school recruits staff correctly and meets all statutory requirements. Leaders and governors focus on staff wellbeing. Staff speak highly of the support they receive. Many parents and carers are positive about the education that their child receives. They appreciate the care that they are given and the interesting learning experiences offered. They value this as important for their children's development.

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

Pupils love to learn because teachers make lessons interesting. They understand that learning new ideas is important for their future education. Pupils work hard. This is because staff have high expectations. Pupils write with care and purpose. This, and their sensible behaviour in class, demonstrates pupils' positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils achieve well from their starting points. They are ready for their next educational stage.

Pupils behave well as they move around the school and during social times. Routines are well established, pupils follow them consistently. This includes the youngest children in the school, who clearly understand the expectations of them. There are few instances of bullying. If it does occur, pupils know staff will deal with it effectively. Pupils have positive relationships with each other and with staff. As a result, the school is harmonious. Pupils thrive and feel safe.

Pupils look forward to coming to school because they feel valued. Consequently, they attend well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities. These activities are planned so that all pupils can take part. Clubs, sports, and creative activities allow pupils to explore their talents, like playing the steel pans. Pupils are proud to represent the school, whether in competitions or through roles that help improve school life. These roles, such as the school council, help pupils to feel that they are an important part of the school community.

Pupils thrive on praise. They work hard each week to earn recognition. Celebration assemblies are a highlight. Many aim to achieve the 'top banana award,' which inspires them to always try their best.

Pupils develop an understanding of world religions. They learn how and why people celebrate in different ways. This helps them show respect and tolerance towards each other. They know that differences make the school a richer place. They learn about democracy and the law. This prepares them successfully for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, should continue to develop greater precision in their oversight, including the focus on some disadvantaged pupils and some children in the early years, so that they can strengthen the impact of their actions and secure consistently high standards across the school's work.
 - Leaders should more closely analyse the performance of different vulnerable groups of pupils, so they can more accurately identify priorities to continue to improve their attendance.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lanna Shaw.

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 headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Hooft

Lead inspector:

Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Debbie Rogan, Ofsted Inspector

Nerrissa Bear, His Majesty's 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

333

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

339

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

2.62%

Well 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

3.00%

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

10.81%

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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	92%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	89%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	71%	Close to average

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	90%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	84%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	0%	47%	Below
2023/24		46%	
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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24		62%	
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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	0%	59%	Below
2023/24		58%	
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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24		59%	
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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	0%	69%	-69 pp
2023/24		67%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24		80%	
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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	0%	78%	-78 pp
2023/24		78%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24		79%	
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)	4.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.1%	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)	7.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	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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