

The Grange Community Infant School

Address: The Avenue, KT15 3RL

Unique reference number (URN): 125037

Inspection report: 9 December 2025

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

Inclusion

Expected standard

Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have been strengthened since the last inspection. There are clear processes in place that allow staff, parents and carers to discuss emerging needs with leaders. This contributes towards a positive culture where pupils' needs are quickly identified and supported. Leaders work closely with other providers to ensure that they have the relevant information for children with SEND before they start in the early years.

Leaders carefully consider the barriers to learning that pupils with SEND face. Tailored individual support helps to ensure that these pupils access the same learning as their peers. Staff are well trained to understand the specific needs of pupils. There is a firm focus on providing pupils with high-quality support. This helps to ensure that any additional interventions result in positive progress from pupils' starting points. Leaders monitor this effectively and respond well to any changing needs. This is further supported by their work with external specialists where needed.

Use of the pupil premium funding is well considered by leaders. Typically, it helps disadvantaged pupils to receive the support that they need. Leaders have rightly identified and started to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils participate in extra-curricular opportunities in school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing are a strength of the school. Leaders recognise the importance of promoting pupils' wellbeing and ensuring that they have a robust understanding of themselves and the world around them. This begins in the early years. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is designed to build pupils' knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. Pupils generally enjoy their learning in these lessons and understand why this is important. Topics are revisited in lessons and assemblies. Staff also provide regular reminders and visiting speakers promote key messages. This helps pupils to remember the important content of these sessions.

The school's values characters help even the youngest children to identify important character traits. They are eager to explain how they have shown these values and link these to the school's behaviour approach. Pupils are proud to be representatives for their school. They relish the opportunity to be a school councillor or eco-councillor. Leaders give this work a high priority. They involve pupils in decision-making and help them to understand the importance of their opinions.

Relationships education is taught in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils are very clear on the importance of celebrating diversity and including everyone. This supports the school's inclusive ethos and is evident throughout the school day. There is a strong sense of tolerance and respect which runs through the school. Staff model these attributes through the caring relationships they develop with pupils.

Pupils benefit from a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, including trips and visits. During the inspection, every class happily participated in year group performances. From the youngest children, talents and interests are nurtured and considered. Leaders have started to identify potential barriers that disadvantaged pupils may face when attending clubs and have tailored their approach to support greater pupil engagement.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

In some areas of the curriculum, pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. A number of pupils have gaps in their knowledge in relation to handwriting, grammar and spelling. This means that they do not secure the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their education. These areas have formed part of leaders' focus this year. However, it is too early to see the impact of the actions leaders have taken.

Pupils' achievement in the phonics screening check has improved year-on-year. Pupils achieve in line with published national outcomes. A love of reading is evident across the school. Many pupils become confident readers by the end of Year 2. Pupils have a genuine enthusiasm for learning and are keen to talk about the activities they have completed.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Over a number of years, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been too low and improvements have been limited. Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed their approach to promoting attendance. They have rightly identified this as an area for improvement and have recently put in place further measures that have resulted in more pupils attending school regularly. However, the impact of these measures is at an early stage.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations for behaviour and why positive behaviour matters. They are keen to meet these expectations and enjoy having their efforts recognised. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to understand the school's approach to behaviour. The school has reviewed its behaviour approach this year and this is having a positive impact. It has reduced the number of behavioural incidents and suspensions. Staff are positive role models. From the early years they help children to understand the rules and routines of school life. Due to the shared understanding of the behaviour systems, there is a caring and calm atmosphere throughout the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

The teaching of writing across the school is variable. Expectations and the focus upon handwriting, punctuation and spelling are inconsistent across classes. Leaders have identified this as an area for development, but improvements are at an early stage. Across

the curriculum, teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. However, in some subjects the activities that teachers design do not enable pupils to learn as well as they could. At times, some staff do not check pupils' understanding of key concepts or intervene quickly enough to close gaps in pupils' learning.

The curriculum is well-designed and adapted to meet the needs of pupils. Staff tailor learning so pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn alongside their peers.

There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 1. Here, staff have benefited from the support that has been provided to them on the teaching of phonics. Typically, pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. The approach to teaching phonics in the early years is more variable and children do not experience the same levels of consistency.

Early years

Needs attention 

There are a number of staff who are new to the school and the early years. Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent understanding of the school's approach to teaching in the early years. As a result, some activities that children complete do not help them to learn the intended knowledge. Opportunities are missed to develop children's understanding of key concepts and important vocabulary. The teaching of phonics in the early years is variable. Leaders have not ensured that staff deliver this learning in line with what is expected. This means that children do not learn this important knowledge as well as they should and limits how well prepared they are for the next stage of learning.

There is a sharp focus on children's personal, social and emotional development in the early years. Children are taught the expectations for behaviour and routines of school life. This helps to create a happy, safe and welcoming environment. Children are keen to engage in learning and play. Through the robust transition process, leaders ensure that they have a clear understanding of children's individual needs before they start. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff as soon as they enter school.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Governors' oversight of leaders' actions to improve the school is not as robust as it could be. Governors do not always have the understanding needed to support and challenge the school regarding school sufficiently. Those responsible for governance are mainly new to their role this academic year. They have taken action to assure themselves that there is a robust safeguarding culture in school and to understand the school's ethos.

Leaders have a clear desire to make a positive difference for pupils and to support all pupils to achieve well. This is reflected in the school's inclusive approach. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken appropriate action to address the areas for improvement. Their work in relation to inclusion, attendance and behaviour is beginning to demonstrate positive impact. They are aware that more needs to be done and plans are already in place to support this. There has also been a renewed focus on involving parents in school life.

There is a well-structured staff development programme which is matched to the school's improvement priorities. Staff typically appreciate the support and training they receive. This training is rooted in up-to-date research and evidence informed. Although there have been changes in relation to inclusion and behaviour procedures, staff generally feel that their workload is considered when new systems are introduced.

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

This is a happy school where everyone is welcome. The inclusive culture means that pupils truly live out the school's mantra of 'I play, I learn, I belong'. Pupils are nurtured and cared for. This helps them to feel safe. They know what to do if something is worrying them and are positive that there is always an individual in school who will help them. Pupils are kind and considerate. On the playground, they play together and make sure everyone is included in their games. Pupils live out the school values. They are enthusiastic about the characters of the resilient rhino, teamwork tiger, respectful rabbit, excellent elephant and community cat, which represent these attributes and this helps pupils to demonstrate them.

Behaviour throughout the school is calm and productive. This helps to create an environment where pupils can learn. When pupils need extra help to manage their own behaviour, staff swiftly provide this. The relationships that adults build with pupils are warm and supportive. This begins from the early years where children form meaningful bonds with key adults. It is here that children learn the school's high expectations for behaviour. Although the majority of pupils attend school regularly, over several years, some disadvantaged pupils have been absent from school too often.

Pupils are proud to be noticed for doing the right thing. The celebration assembly is a highlight for them and they are keen to share the success of their friends. Pupils are keen learners and are eager to participate in class. However, leaders have not ensured that children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 learn as well as they should. A number of pupils have gaps in their learning that have not been addressed. This includes important knowledge and skills linked to spelling and writing.

Next steps

- Governors should ensure that they have a secure oversight of the school's strategic direction in order to provide appropriate support and challenge.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils acquire the foundational knowledge they need in grammar, spelling and writing in readiness for key stage 2.
 - Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching, including using assessment information and formative assessment securely to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, is embedded across the school so that all groups of pupils make sufficient progress across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who persistently miss out on periods of their education.
 - Leaders should ensure that disadvantaged pupils participate and fully benefit from the extra-curricular activities that the school makes available.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sam Jenkins.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher during the inspection. They also spoke to other staff members, parents and pupils. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Since the previous inspection, a new inclusion lead has commenced her role. The staff in the teaching team in the early years are all new to the school and started at the beginning of the 2025 academic year.

Headteacher: Muneera Smith

Lead inspector:

Sara Staggs, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Howie, 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 9 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

224

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

270

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)

10.71%

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

1.34%

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

8.93%

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).

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 terms)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24	6.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	5.5%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	16.7%	13.3%	Above
2023/24	16.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	15.1%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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