

The Rowans

Address: Silverbank, Churchill Avenue, Chatham, Chatham, Kent, ME5 0LB

Unique reference number (URN): 144134

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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve well. They often start the school with significant gaps in their learning. The school implements a range of strategies to address these successfully, including targeted academic support for disadvantaged pupils. This helps the majority of pupils to catch up quickly. They develop the secure knowledge and skills they need to succeed. Pupils are proud of their achievements and produce work that is of a very high quality.

Leaders ensure older pupils have access to a range of qualifications. This wide and increasing offer supports pupils to be prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils achieve consistently well in these examinations.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders prioritise and celebrate attendance at school. Many pupils arrive at the school having previously had low rates of attendance, or a history of not attending school at all. The school addresses this quickly. Where absence persists, the school responds promptly. For example, leaders make reasonable and appropriate adjustments for pupils. The vast majority of pupils significantly improve their attendance while they are at the school.

Staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The school values of kindness, commitment and resilience are actively lived out by pupils. They are kind and highly respectful to the staff and each other. Pupils are keen to help and support others. The school supports pupils effectively to make swift progress in developing strategies to manage their own behaviour. This ensures that there is a calm, purposeful environment in school that supports positive attitudes to learning.

Strong, caring relationships between staff and pupils underpin the school's work. Staff understand and apply the school's behaviour management system routinely. Serious incidents, such as abuse or harassment, are very rare at this school. If they occur, they are dealt with effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They ensure the curriculum is well planned. It is designed carefully so that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to the school's ambitious curriculum. They have high expectations for what pupils should learn.

The curriculum is taught consistently well. Teachers have detailed knowledge of their pupils and their individual needs. They check pupils' understanding regularly and adapt their teaching effectively to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge that pupils have. Teachers ensure that they meet pupils' individual needs. This results in pupils developing secure knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Teachers are trained well. They have assured subject knowledge and develop this continuously. Teachers use their training and knowledge consistently to ensure that lessons are accessible for all pupils.

Leaders know that many pupils arrive at the school with significant gaps in their learning. They put in place highly effective strategies to address this. For example, pupils across the school, who are at the early stages of learning to read, are provided with skilled teaching and support that helps them to catch up successfully.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Staff at The Rowans are committed to changing the future life chances of all pupils who attend the school. Underpinning this is the school's well-embedded inclusive culture and practice. High-quality training supports staff. They build positive, secure and trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs are consistently understood. As a result of this, pupils are supported to settle into the school quickly. They rise to the high expectations that staff have of them.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress rigorously. The school's use of regular assessment ensures that barriers to learning and wellbeing are identified and reduced swiftly. Staff use their assessments to respond skilfully to pupils' changing needs. As a result of this, barriers to learning and wellbeing reduce significantly over time. This enhances pupils' experiences of learning.

The school's pupil premium strategy is carefully considered. It identifies the wide-ranging barriers that the most disadvantaged pupils face. Leaders monitor the impact of the strategy closely to ensure it is effective. The school offers a range of targeted strategies to support pupils and meet their specific needs.

Leaders work with families and external agencies collaboratively and proactively to ensure pupils at the school get the support they need.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders have embedded a clear, shared vision for the school. They have high expectations and have created a strong sense of community. They know pupils and families extremely well. Leaders work effectively with families and other professionals to ensure pupils' needs are securely understood and met. Leaders are highly successful in realising their vision for pupils to re-engage with learning and commit to their education. Their impact has been sustained over a significant period of time.

Leaders have an astute understanding of the school's many strengths. They have carefully planned the next steps that will develop the school even further.

Those responsible for governance also know the school very well. They take pride in the school's work. They receive effective induction and training. This supports them to meet their statutory duties successfully. They monitor the school effectively and provide robust support and challenge.

Leaders ensure that staff receive high-quality training and support. The staff are proud to work at the school. They value the culture of professional trust that leaders have developed and the support that they receive. Leaders are deeply considerate of staff workload and

wellbeing. Many parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View during the inspection were highly complimentary about the school. A number of parents highlighted the profoundly positive impact of the school on their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school's relationship, sex and health education curriculum is well planned. Leaders have identified precisely what pupils should know. Pupils learn this curriculum very well. For example, they talk confidently about how to stay safe online and in the local community.

The school offers a wide-range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their post-16 options for education, support and training. There are strong partnerships that exist between the school and local employers and education providers. Highly effective work experience increases pupils' motivation and ambition. Pupils have a secure understanding about how to achieve their career goals.

The school also provides an extensive offer of other opportunities for pupils that includes visits, clubs and trips. These are available to all pupils. They give pupils access to a wealth of cultural and social experiences. The school tracks the level of pupil participation in these opportunities carefully. This information is used by leaders to make adaptations where necessary, so that all pupils can benefit from the school's comprehensive personal development programme.

Pupils experience caring and effective pastoral support at the school. Staff have a deep understanding of pupils and their individual needs. They quickly identify the pupils who may benefit from additional support and put in place tailored and specific help and resources, where they are needed. This includes drawing on the expertise of other professionals if it is appropriate. Pupils appreciate this support. Leaders monitor the impact of it carefully to ensure it is effective and appropriate.

The school supports pupils well to develop their social skills, resolve conflicts and develop their tolerance of others. As a result, pupils are reflective, behave with integrity and cooperate with others. This helps to prepare pupils for adulthood effectively.

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

Pupils are valued at The Rowans. They enjoy attending the school. Pupils develop a deep sense of belonging due to the warm and caring relationships they quickly develop with staff. Pupils trust that staff will support them with any challenges they face. For many pupils, attending The Rowans gives them their first positive experience of school and education.

Pupils are skilfully supported by staff, who help them to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour. Staff respond quickly to provide additional support for pupils who need it. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with bullying if it occurs. This helps them feel happy and safe and results in a calm and respectful school environment.

The school supports pupils to become confident and resilient. Pupils engage positively with the community through opportunities, such as preparing and delivering afternoon tea to local residents. The school provides pupils with an extensive range of wider experiences to support their personal development. This offer includes visits, trips, work experience and the opportunity to take part in sporting events. It gives pupils the chance to try new things, discover interests and to build positive relationships with their peers.

This is a highly inclusive school, where staff are ambitious for all pupils. The school is very effective at identifying and addressing the academic barriers that pupils face. Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching that is adapted to meet their needs. This enables them to learn effectively, make rapid progress and achieve well. They are prepared well for their next steps.

This school is successful at improving pupils' life chances.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Howard Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Owen McColgan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dan McDonald.

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 and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with the chief executive officer and those responsible for governance. Inspectors spoke with several pupils and staff. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school joined The Howard Academy Trust in February 2025.

All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have typically experienced difficulties in mainstream schools. All pupils in the secondary provision have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion.

The school does not use alternative provision.

The school does not have a resourced provision.

Principal: Fiona May

Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Shaun Jarvis, 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 9 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

70

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.

School capacity

89

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

70.0%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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

30.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

70.00%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Well above 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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
2024/25 (1 term)	18.2%
2023/24 (3 term)	15.6%
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (1 term)	59.1%
2023/24 (3 term)	55.1%
2022/23 (3 term)	59.6%

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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