

New Rush Hall School

Address: Fencepiece Road, IG6 2LB

Unique reference number (URN): 102879

Inspection report: 25 November 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.

Inclusion**Exceptional** ●

The quality and consistency of the school's inclusive practice is exemplary. Professional learning for staff is carefully planned and highly effective. Inclusive approaches are well embedded and understood by all staff. As a result, staff are adept at tailoring provision to meet pupils' individual needs and circumstances with precision. This means that support is accessible for all pupils, meeting the range of complex learning needs and/or pupils' personal barriers to learning. As a result, pupils flourish in their social and personal development and achieve very well.

The school identifies pupils' needs swiftly and accurately. They work effectively with parents, carers and a broad range of experts to co-produce packages of support. Pupil premium funding is maximised to enhance the school's offer. This means that pupils receive purposeful help that is the most appropriate for them at that time. Leaders and staff monitor the effectiveness and impact of their work closely. They amend, adjust and refine provision as needed. This ensures that all strategies used to reduce pupils' barriers are explicit and deliberate.

Alternative provision (AP) is commissioned when it is in the best interests of pupils. Decisions to use AP are made collectively and include the voice of the pupil. This includes selecting an AP that meets their academic and social needs, as well as pupils' interests. Leaders assure themselves of the quality of the provision through regular visits and reports.

Personal development and well-being**Exceptional** ●

The school prepares pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, incredibly well for adulthood. All pupils are helped to understand their personal barriers, such as managing their behaviour or building relationships. This is delivered through the school's curriculum and a thoughtfully planned offer of counselling, coaching and mentoring, which includes therapeutic sessions, mentoring through fishing, music production, boxing and personal training. Pupils were unequivocal in their assertion that, because of this school, they were now able to recognise their own challenges and that they were actively and successfully addressing them. For example, they told inspectors that they have strategies to keep themselves physically and mentally safe. Pupils have the confidence to make mistakes and ask for help. They understand the importance of treating everyone equally and with respect.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their confidence, independence and resilience. They can compete in sporting events and whole-school performances. All pupils, including in the primary phase, have the opportunity for overnight stays at adventure centres. This is further enhanced by an extensive offer of extra-curricular activities, such as skiing, sailing and horse riding. In addition to this, leaders have carefully mapped out a range of cultural experiences to broaden pupils' interests as well as develop their understanding of fundamental British values and modern Britain. For example, pupils have the opportunity to attend the ballet, experience Shakespeare at the Globe and eat out at a range of restaurants. Pupils visit places of worship and celebrate a range of festivals. All pupils have access to this offer, regardless of circumstance or disadvantage.

The school offers a well-designed careers programme. Pupils in all key stages learn about careers through the curriculum. This learning is supplemented by a thoughtful programme of visits and guest speakers. When possible, pupils are directed towards opportunities that mirror their personal interests, such as engaging with a range of guest speakers, for example, from the RAF and recording music in music studios.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders check pupils' starting points thoroughly when they join the school. They use this information to identify any gaps in pupils' reading, writing, mathematics and communication knowledge or cognitive ability. Leaders provide pupils with a range of support strategies to help them to catch up. As a result, pupils typically progress well through the curriculum from their starting points. Furthermore, pupils are well prepared for their next phase of learning, for example moving from the primary to the secondary curriculum.

When pupils leave the school, they typically have the qualifications they need for their next steps in education, employment or training. They also leave the school with the skills to manage themselves, such as the ability to build positive relationships, to deal with set backs and to persevere when facing challenges. Consequently, pupils usually maintain their next placements in education or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Many pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education prior to joining this school. A key strength of the provision is the highly effective way that staff support pupils to re-engage with learning and improve their attendance rates. When required, personalised plans are implemented to ensure that pupils settle quickly into school life. Through the school's extensive enrichment offer, pupils develop positive relationships with staff and their peers. These approaches have a clear and continued impact, contributing to pupils' improved confidence and engagement. As a result, attendance has risen steadily over the last four years and is above the national average for similar schools.

Pupils' behaviour in and around school is typically calm and purposeful. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and to understand the impact of their actions on the emotions and feelings of others. This helps to embed a culture where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Consequently, pupils are able to build and maintain friendships, which supports constructive and positive social times. In lessons, pupils attend well to their learning. Through personalised sessions with trained staff, pupils work on their specific challenges. Pupils are helped to understand and recognise their own emotions. They are taught strategies to help themselves remain calm and focus. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour reduce over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders are well informed about the quality of the curriculum. This curriculum is carefully designed and sequenced to meet pupils' needs. Subjects are taught well because teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to support pupils' understanding. Teachers ensure that pupils, in the primary- and secondary-aged classes, have the knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication before moving on to new or more complex learning.

When pupils join the school, leaders ensure that pupils' confidence and fluency in reading, writing and mathematics are checked. In both the primary and secondary phases, where gaps are identified, pupils benefit from daily additional lessons to strengthen their knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. The teaching of reading beyond phonics is also prioritised to ensure that pupils can read fluently and understand what they have read.

All staff place a strong emphasis on supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those with complex learning needs. Teaching is carefully adapted and additional support is deployed effectively. The curriculum is responsive to pupils' emotional and wellbeing needs. Teachers anticipate and adapt content sensitively to ensure that pupils are not unsettled by material that may relate to their personal circumstances. This flexible approach enables pupils to access learning confidently and ensures that provision is inclusive and supportive.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders, including governors, have an insightful understanding of the school's context and challenges. They know what is working well and what actions are needed to refine their practice even further. This is because they have well-embedded systems to check on all aspects of the school's work.

Staff are very positive about working in this school. They value the extensive professional learning they receive, which positively impacts on their workload and wellbeing. The professional learning programme includes best practice as well as theoretical understanding of the particular needs of pupils. Professional learning is meaningful and delivered by a range of experts from across the school and externally. The offer is also available to, and taken up by, governors. The staff team is encouraged to broaden its skillsets and professional understanding through qualifications. For example, staff have been trained to become counsellors, qualified teachers and undertaken leadership development. This ensures that all staff have the expertise that they need to fulfil their roles effectively and make decisions that are in the best interests of pupils.

Governors provide the school with the necessary scrutiny and challenge to deliver its ambitious vision. They are aligned to the ethos of the school and have detailed awareness of the strategic direction. Many have supported the school for a long time and are, therefore, very well aware of the contextual needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils who attend. This further supports their ability to assure themselves about the quality of the school's provision and to confidently meet statutory duties.

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

Staff greet pupils warmly when they arrive to start the school day. Pupils settle quickly into the daily routines, whether that is eating breakfast with their peers or spending social time in the common room. Positive relationships between staff and pupils develop quickly. This helps pupils to build trust in the staff, whereas in the past, building relationships was sometimes a barrier to their success. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly. They appreciate the support that they are given and they feel safe.

Staff have a deep understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs. They are adept at anticipating when pupils may require time to regulate or compose themselves, and they swiftly put support in place to help pupils manage those moments of uncertainty. Leaders encourage pupils to demonstrate the school's values. For example pupils are proud to be commended for showing respect, resilience and courage. Consequently, pupils' behaviour in lessons is positive and does not routinely impact on the learning of others.

The school is aspirational for what pupils can achieve. Staff are successful in their efforts to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their age, background or learning needs, receive a high-quality education. As a result, pupils achieve well and meet their curriculum and personal goals. All pupils take part in an exemplary offer of experiences to promote their personal development. For example, pupils have the opportunity to practise important life skills. This includes understanding personal boundaries, navigating stressful situations and making friends. They can also receive qualifications in vocational subjects, such as construction, horticulture and animal care. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps academically, emotionally and socially. Typically, pupils continue this success after they leave the school. For example, many pupils continue their education, attend university or gain employment.

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

The school is part of a federation called The Rise Group.

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 executive headteacher, senior leaders, governors and staff.

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 caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school makes use of two registered alternative provisions.

The school is registered for up to 80 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 93 pupils on roll.

Executive headteacher: Sam Walters

Lead inspector:

Kieran Bird, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Lisa Strong, 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

91

Well below 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: 1,067

School capacity

80

Well 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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

72.53%

Well 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: 28.9%

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

93.41%

Well above 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: 3.1%

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support

3.30%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13%

Location deprivation

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)

No 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).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers	89%	91%	Not available
2022 leavers	22%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers	64%	94%	Not available

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 (1 term)	14.5%	7.7%	Above
2023/24	16.2%	8.9%	Above
2022/23	17.2%	9.0%	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 (1 term)	37.1%	21.1%	Above
2023/24	45.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23	56.0%	26.5%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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