

Richmond Hill School

Address: Queen Street, Aspatria, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 3BQ

Unique reference number (URN): 112127

Inspection report: 10 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a priority for leaders. Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. Leaders follow up first-day absences systematically. They work with families to help them understand expectations for attendance. Where pupils struggle, they benefit from effective support to help them attend more regularly. Staff work with families to address barriers to attendance. These actions are having a positive impact on attendance rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Warm and positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Leaders set clear expectations of behaviour. Staff support pupils to meet these expectations consistently. There are established routines that pupils follow throughout the day and pupils respond well to the expectations that staff have of them. Typically, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. 'Play pals' help pupils to resolve any conflict at social times. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from sensitive, targeted support. This helps them to engage fully in school life.

Bullying is rare. Leaders take prompt action if any incidents occur.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff interact with children skilfully throughout the day in the early years. They teach children how to use new words effectively. For example, they do this through stories, songs and rhymes. Children respond positively to adults and engage well in activities. Staff make careful checks to ensure that children learn and remember new vocabulary. Children apply the ambitious language they learn successfully when they are playing.

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Reading is prioritised. Reception children learn to read through a clear early reading curriculum as soon as they join the school. Staff teach the curriculum well. Children learn sounds to read words accurately. They use these sounds to read sentences in books that are suitably matched to their phonics knowledge. This helps children to become fluent readers.

Children are typically independent and purposeful in their play. The provision for 2- and 3-year-olds offers a nurturing environment suited to their age and stage of development. Staff know children and families well. Leaders understand the speech and language needs that some children have when they start and put effective support in place. Staff build trusting relationships with parents and carers from the outset. This helps them to work together to support children's development. As a result, children are generally well prepared for Year 1.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide extensive opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, trips and residential visits. These include sports clubs, music opportunities and visits that support their learning. Free clubs ensure that all pupils can join

in. Leaders actively monitor participation through 'personal development passports' and they remove barriers that might prevent some pupils from taking part. As a result, pupils regularly take up wider opportunities. For example, they attend the theatre, visit nature reserves, forests and the nearby city centre. Pupils take part in outdoor activities, such as gardening in the community. These experiences help pupils to understand their local area and the wider world around them.

Leaders support pupils' wellbeing effectively. Pupils use worry boxes to share concerns with trusted adults. Staff use their specialist training well to help pupils understand and manage their feelings. The relationships, sex and health education curriculum meets statutory requirements. It promotes pupils' age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils learn how to cross the road safely and the online and offline risks to their safety and wellbeing.

Pupils contribute to school life in meaningful ways. For example, they take on leadership roles within the school, such as ambassadors and school councillors. These roles help them to develop responsibility and confidence. They also develop pupils' social skills and sense of citizenship.

Pupils learn about different religions, for example, by meeting faith leaders and they learn about types of families. They appreciate that people have different cultures and beliefs. They show respect for equality through their caring actions. Pupils generally understand fundamental British values, such as the rule of law. They demonstrate their understanding of democracy through participation in school elections. These opportunities prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. While pupils tend to achieve broadly in line with the national average in national tests at the end of key stage 2, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is widening. Some disadvantaged pupils do not secure strong foundations, for example, in spelling and handwriting. Despite the extra help that pupils receive, these gaps are not closing quickly enough and this prevents pupils from making the progress they could.

Some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not remember the important knowledge that they are taught securely. Across the wider curriculum, they do not consistently make connections between what they are learning now and what they have learned previously. This means that they do not develop detailed and well-connected knowledge across subjects. Consequently, some pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In the areas where teaching is more effective, some pupils are beginning to remember more precisely what they have learned.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teaching does not consistently enable pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, to learn well. Teaching does not routinely check what pupils already know and can do before introducing new learning. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This includes in their foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils struggle to learn new subject-specific vocabulary. This limits their ability to learn and remember new knowledge over time. While leaders have clear systems to review the quality of teaching, their evaluations do not consistently identify key areas for improvement.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is appropriately sequenced. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge. Some teachers use this effectively to help pupils build their knowledge. In some subjects, such as science and geography, this helps pupils to develop more secure understanding and they remember more of what they have learned. However, sometimes designed activities do not help pupils achieve well. Additionally, some teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough. They do not use the information that they gather to make changes to their teaching, when they are needed. As a result, these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should or learn the curriculum securely.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

A number of disadvantaged pupils do not learn as well as they should. The support that pupils receive does not consistently help them to learn securely and remember more over time. Some pupils, including children who are looked after, have gaps in their knowledge and skills. They struggle with their handwriting and spelling. The gaps are not closing quickly enough. Leaders' strategy to support disadvantaged pupils, including the use of additional funding, lacks detail about the specific barriers that individual pupils face. This means that support lacks precision. As a result, these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should.

Leaders have created an inclusive culture, where all pupils are made to feel welcome. Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly. They work with families and other professionals to understand pupils' needs and to reduce barriers to learning and/or their wellbeing. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same curriculum, trips and enrichment activities. Additional adults work with pupils during lessons to provide help. Leaders are beginning to check more carefully how well these pupils achieve and the support that pupils need.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have not addressed some of their priority areas effectively enough. For example, while they know some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, leaders' actions have not secured consistent improvements. As a result, gaps in some pupils' knowledge persists and some pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders do not check carefully enough whether their actions make a difference to how well pupils learn. Their evaluations of some aspects of the school are not accurate enough. When leaders check individual subjects, they do not focus sharply enough on how

well some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, learn. Despite this, leaders understand the school's context well. They have established a positive culture, where staff feel valued.

Staff appreciate the support they receive to manage their workload and wellbeing. For example, subject leaders appreciate the time that they are given to carry out their roles. While professional learning is in place for staff, its impact is variable. This is because training does not address the specific inconsistencies in teaching as well as it could.

Governors understand their statutory duties. Leaders and governors make decisions in the best interests of pupils. However, governors' strategic challenge for disadvantaged pupils is at an early stage. For example, while they provide secure financial oversight overall, they do not check the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils with enough rigour.

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

Pupils at Richmond Hill Primary School value the warm relationships that they have with adults and with each other. They appreciate that adults listen to them and help them when they have concerns. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils feel included in the day-to-day life of the school. For example, they appreciate the opportunities they get to take on responsibilities that help their school community and enjoy representing the school in competitions and events. Children in the early years arrive happy, settled and eager to learn.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They cooperate well with each other and respond positively to the clear expectations that adults set for their behaviour. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that adults deal with any unkind behaviour quickly. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and enjoy learning. However, teaching does not consistently support pupils to overcome the barriers to learning that they face. Some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve as well as they could. They struggle to remember the important knowledge that they have been taught. Some pupils have gaps in their spelling and handwriting. This limits their ability to express their ideas clearly in writing. Consequently, some pupils are not as well prepared for their next stage of education as they could be.

There are a wide range of clubs and activities on offer to pupils. They enjoy discovering new interests and talents by taking part in sport, music activities and drama. They value the visits to different places that help them to learn about their local area and the wider world. Pupils learn about different cultures, religions and ways of life. They understand that people can be different and deserve equal respect. Pupils develop an understanding of important values, such as democracy, tolerance and fairness, that help to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently design and select learning activities that help pupils to learn the curriculum securely, remember it and embed their understanding over time.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment consistently so that it identifies precisely the gaps in pupils' knowledge, especially for disadvantaged pupils and that well-matched and effective support is put in place so that gaps close quickly.
 - Leaders, including governors, should ensure that their checks on teaching and additional support are accurate and focus sharply on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. These checks should inform appropriate and timely actions so that effective teaching is the norm and that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they are capable of.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Fiona Pearson.

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

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and the head of school during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout the inspection. Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs nursery provision for 2- and 3-year-olds.

Headteacher: Rachel Blair

Lead inspector:

Mark Hazzard, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Keith Wright, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Beattie, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

203

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

240

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)

38.04%

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: 26.3%

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

1.97%

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

12.32%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	66%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	53%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	44%	Above

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	59%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	56%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	60%	Close to average

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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	58%	Above

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	75%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	69%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	59%	Above

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	53%	68%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	66%	5 pp

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	59%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	78%	-7 pp

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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	77%	-6 pp

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	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	69%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	78%	79%	-2 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	79%	7 pp

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)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	5.9%	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 (2 term)	14.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.9%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.0%	16.2%	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 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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