

Newstead Wood School

Address: Avebury Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 9SA

Unique reference number (URN): 136551

Inspection report: 28 April 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.

Exceptional ●

Achievement

Exceptional ●

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. Outcomes in public examinations at key stages 4 and 5 are consistently above national averages in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also achieve very highly. There is no discernible difference between their outcomes and those of other pupils.

Pupils articulate confidently what they know. They understand how to improve and show ambition for high outcomes. Pupils demonstrate secure progress, clear academic goals and a precise understanding of what is required to attain the highest grades. Sixth-form students in particular clearly understand how current learning supports future academic and career aspirations. Pupils' high levels of achievement prepare them exceptionally well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils' work across the curriculum is of a very high quality, such as accurate written work with extended pieces of writing completed confidently. This includes pupils with SEND and those who face disadvantage. Pupils display creativity and resilience in the way they apply themselves to tasks. They learn new concepts quickly. Work in all subjects shows pupils' sophisticated application of skills and knowledge.

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional ●

Attendance is a clear strength of the school. This is because pupils feel a keen sense of belonging to the school community and do not want to miss out on important learning. Leaders' work in this area is underpinned by rigorous tracking, high expectations and effective communication with parents and carers. Overall attendance is consistently above the national average, with particular success in maintaining high attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders identify and respond proactively to patterns of absence. Robust systems include timely follow up and safeguarding involvement. These ensure that pupils are very well supported and improvements over time demonstrate the effectiveness of leaders' targeted strategies.

Behaviour around the school is calm and respectful. Pupils conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner. They consistently interact harmoniously with staff and each other, and demonstrate keen social awareness. Pupils are extremely well behaved in and out of lessons. Lesson changeovers are orderly. A culture of belonging and acceptance is evident throughout the school. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of each other. Bullying is not accepted. Leaders take swift action to deal with behaviour when it falls short, including close work with parents. Individualised adaptations are put in place for pupils who need them.

Inclusion

Exceptional ●

This is a highly inclusive school. Pupils who have specific needs or barriers to their learning flourish. Leaders consistently have the best interests of pupils at the heart of their decision-making. The school fosters a genuine sense of belonging, underpinned by rich and highly positive experiences for pupils, in and out of the classroom.

Skilled staff identify pupils' needs with accuracy and urgency. They draw on a deep understanding of each pupil to continually refine and adapt support so that it has the greatest possible impact. As a result, provision is carefully tailored and consistently effective, enabling pupils to make substantial progress from their starting points. Teachers have the highest expectations for all pupils. Teaching adaptations promote important skills, such as cognitive independence and develop high-order thinking skills. Pupils with specific needs or barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing thrive at this school as a result.

Leaders engage very effectively with professionals, external agencies and parents and carers. This collaboration ensures that pupils benefit from a comprehensive package of support. A wide range of carefully considered emotional and academic strategies is in place. This includes counselling and access to the school's dedicated 'support room', which helps pupils manage their emotional wellbeing, anxiety and stress. Pupil premium funding is used strategically to enhance the experiences of disadvantaged pupils. It ensures that disadvantaged pupils achieve extremely well and participate fully in a wide range of enrichment opportunities.

Strong standard

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Teaching across the school is very effective, and teachers have consistently secure subject knowledge. They deliver a well-sequenced curriculum using clear explanations and building lesson content so that it becomes progressively more complex.

Pupils are very well prepared for national tests and examinations. Teachers use targeted strategies to support high attainment and exam technique. For example, they use skilful questioning to extend pupils' learning, enabling pupils to build on their knowledge and skills. Pupils enjoy their learning. Learning tasks are well matched to their needs, providing both challenge and the support required to succeed.

All pupils access the same ambitious curriculum. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of how to adapt learning when needed. For example, they use modelling, success criteria and regular checks for understanding to provide precise feedback. Lessons set clear expectations and include opportunities for independent thinking and reasoning. This supports pupils to think deeply and apply their learning beyond structured tasks. Assessment is used highly effectively to identify strengths and plan next steps.

Pupils' work shows secure literacy skills, including high-quality extended writing and clear development of subject-specific vocabulary over time. Leaders skilfully adapt elements of the curriculum to reflect pupils' starting points, including changes to texts and themes. This helps to ensure that pupils across different groups achieve highly.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leadership across the school is ambitious and reflective. It is driven by a clear vision that prioritises high-quality teaching and a culture of belonging. Leaders are determined to

provide pupils with the best care and support while facilitating academic achievement. Governance is highly effective. Those responsible for governance support the school's work, check its impact carefully and fulfil their statutory duties. They provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders and have a clear understanding of the school's improvement priorities.

Leaders analyse achievement information carefully, with focused work on particular pupils proving particularly effective. Leaders at all levels know pupils well and place pupils at the centre of their work. They ensure that pastoral and academic needs are consistently met. Leaders engage with parents and carers, the local community, other schools and the trust to enhance academic and pastoral provision at the school.

Staff development is a notable strength. Staff benefit from regular professional learning. Many staff report that school systems, such as assessment processes, are well organised and help reduce workload. Leaders prioritise both professional development and wellbeing, which contributes to staff retention. Early career teachers and trainees receive high-quality mentoring and support. Safeguarding procedures, whistleblowing systems and a calm, purposeful culture help staff feel safe and supported. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Leaders set a clear and ambitious vision for the sixth form. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of pupils and prepare them well for adult life. Teachers have expert subject knowledge and ensure that students, including those who have specific needs or who face barriers, make rapid progress. Students' attainment in national examinations is consistently above national averages. High-quality feedback on their work helps students feel confident, supported and ambitious. Students are proud of their achievements and articulate their learning clearly. They are well prepared for examinations and show high levels of independence.

Post-16 students play an active role in the life of the school and participate in a wide breadth of extra-curricular opportunities. Staff ensure that work experience is carefully matched to students' future career goals. The school provides high-quality, bespoke support to students applying to university. For example, it has beneficial links to universities and provides continued guidance for students taking a gap year. Students clearly understand their destination options and the steps needed to reach them.

Leaders consider contextual needs specific to post-16 students, such as examination anxiety, and provide tailored support when needed. Male students are well supported when they join. Staff ensure that they settle quickly into a predominantly female environment and soon feel part of the school community.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils are very well supported by pastoral teams and enjoy coming to school, particularly pupils who have specific needs or barriers. They describe how clubs and societies strengthen their confidence, leadership and communication skills. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, online and offline, and have an impressive knowledge about cultural diversity. They feel staff want them to succeed without compromising their wellbeing and value this highly.

Pupils demonstrate independence, resilience and social confidence. They would recommend the school, and most choose to stay into the sixth form. Sixth-form boys describe a highly effective induction that helped them feel welcomed into a predominantly female environment. They demonstrate thoughtful awareness of gender dynamics and report that learning alongside female peers has strengthened their emotional communication.

The school is highly inclusive of all faiths and backgrounds. Diversity is celebrated through events such as the 'We Are Newstead' culture day. Pupils benefit from a wide range of external enrichment opportunities, including cultural events and international trips. The school also offers a large number of internal extra-curricular activities, many of which are led by pupils. These contribute greatly to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Careers education is a particular strength, with well-matched work experience placements supporting aspiration and informed decision-making.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education, including relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, is broad and often responsive to emerging issues, such as vaping. Leaders' understanding of the requirements of the RSE curriculum is inconsistent however, and staff lack training in some aspects. This means that pupils do not consistently receive the depth of learning that they do in other subjects. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, for instance of fundamental British values and protected characteristics.

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

Pupils are very proud to be part of this school. Staff give them extensive support, and pupils value the care given. Pupils behave really well, and relationships throughout the school are consistently warm and respectful. Pupils enjoy their learning and are thoroughly prepared for their next steps when they leave school. They appreciate the high-quality education they receive.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and each other. This helps create a real sense of belonging throughout the school. Staff know pupils well, and pupils feel safe at school. Attendance is high. Pupils want to be in school and they want to learn. The school

provides excellent support for pupils who have specific needs or barriers to their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved in all aspects of school life. There is no difference between the achievement of pupils who have specific needs or who face barriers and those who do not. Bullying is rare and is dealt with whenever it arises. Pupils are confident that any worries raised with staff are acted on swiftly and appropriately.

There is a thriving sense of belonging at the school. Pupils report that they feel part of a family, and this is highly valued. Staff provide superb pastoral care, and this contributes to the highly inclusive ethos of the school.

The school's extensive extra-curricular programme enables pupils to develop their existing skills and talents and explore new interests. Many extra-curricular groups are led by pupils, and there are additional roles in the school that develop pupils' leadership skills and experience. Pupils appreciate these opportunities. They typically feel that 'the school makes us better versions of ourselves'.

Next steps

- School leaders and those responsible for governance should strengthen their oversight of personal, social, health and economic education, including relationships and sex education and health education, to ensure that it is implemented with the same consistency and high expectations of pupils' work as the rest of the curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of United Learning, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dame Reena Keeble.

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 headteacher, the chair of the local governing body, governors, the trust's regional director, senior leaders and other leaders during the inspection.

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 does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Interim headteacher: Paul Norman

Lead inspector:

Emily Leonard, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jonathan Roddick, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Dijana Piralic, Ofsted Inspector

Piers Saunders, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,262

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: 1,067

School capacity

955

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

6.65%

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: 28.9%

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

0.24%

Well 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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.11%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	100.0%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98.1%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	82.8	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	80.2	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	81.5	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	1.05	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	1.13	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	100.0%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	25.8%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	25.2%	S

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	83.2	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	34.6	S
2022/23 (final)	S	35.0	S

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	-0.57	S
2022/23 (final)	S	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	100.0%	53.1%	46.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	53.1%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	52.4%	S

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	83.2	50.4	32.8

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	S	50.0	S
2022/23 (final)	S	50.3	S

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	S	0.16	S
2022/23 (final)	S	0.17	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.

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 (revised)	100%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	100%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	43.52	35.00	Above
2023/24 (final)	45.61	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	43.33	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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 (3 term)	3.6%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	9.0%	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 (3 term)	4.5%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	15.0%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	10.6%	26.5%	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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