

Wivelsfield Primary School

Address: South Road, Wivelsfield Green, East Sussex, RH17 7QN

Unique reference number (URN): 114424

Inspection report: 30 June 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.

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils are proud of their school and make a positive contribution to its welcoming, inclusive and caring community. They reflect thoughtfully on their experiences, consider the views of others and take responsibility for their actions. Through daily interactions, pupils demonstrate kindness, respect and empathy, understanding the importance of belonging to a community where everyone is valued. Leadership opportunities, including class council, eco-council, digital leaders, play leaders and prefect roles, enable pupils to contribute actively to school life. Pupils know that their views are listened to and can lead to positive change.

Leaders have established a well-planned personal development programme that is embedded throughout the curriculum and enhanced by a wide range of enrichment opportunities. The programme is reviewed regularly and adapted using pupil voice and safeguarding information to ensure it remains relevant to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils develop confidence, resilience and the personal qualities required for future success.

Personal, social and health education is delivered very effectively. Pupils gain a secure understanding of healthy relationships, consent, online and personal safety, body changes, and the risks associated with alcohol and drugs. They discuss sensitive issues maturely and know how to access support from trusted adults when needed. Consequently, pupils are well prepared to make informed choices and keep themselves safe.

Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of fundamental British Values and protected characteristics. They speak respectfully about people from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds, showing a mature appreciation of equality, diversity and inclusion. Planned learning and discussion help pupils challenge stereotypes and value the diversity of modern Britain.

The school offers a rich range of experiences that broaden horizons and raise aspirations. Educational visits, residential, music opportunities and religious celebrations deepen pupils' understanding of the wider world. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access these opportunities fully. Strong pastoral provision, including The Nest and nurture groups, supports pupils' emotional wellbeing, confidence and personal growth.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils achieve well. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has typically been above national averages over time. Published outcomes declined in 2025, and writing remains less secure than other subjects. However, evidence from current pupils' work demonstrates that the curriculum is having a positive impact and that pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils develop secure knowledge and skills across the curriculum, building on prior learning. Across subjects, pupils recall previous learning effectively and apply their knowledge with confidence, enabling them to make good progress over time.

Leaders carefully monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils generally make secure progress from their starting points. Reading remains a particular strength, with effective support ensuring that pupils catch up quickly when needed. Leaders have also taken purposeful action to improve writing, including transcription, spelling and writing fluency. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work, which remains a school focus.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor attendance carefully and have a clear understanding of patterns of absence, particularly for pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement. They build positive relationships with families and provide regular, supportive communication to encourage good attendance. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages and continues to improve. Leaders respond sensitively to barriers linked to health and wellbeing, offering tailored support such as the 'Rise and Shine' provision each morning. When concerns arise, leaders act quickly, working with families and external agencies to improve attendance and ensure that pupils engage fully in school life.

Behaviour across the school is positive and typically calm. Clear rules and routines help create a safe and respectful environment where pupils feel valued and supported. Positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' confidence, wellbeing and engagement in learning. Staff use a range of effective strategies to support pupils' behaviour, including personalised approaches for pupils with additional needs. For example, The Nest provides a calm space where pupils can regulate their emotions and return to learning successfully. Pupils are generally polite, respectful and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Bullying and discrimination are uncommon and addressed promptly. Leaders continue to improve consistency in applying high expectations for behaviour so that occasional low-level disruption is reduced and pupils can focus fully on their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of education across the school. They use their insight effectively to shape professional development, refine the curriculum and target resources where they have the greatest impact. Recent improvements, particularly the clear emphasis on foundational knowledge in key stage 1, are evident in lessons, pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and well sequenced, reflecting the needs of pupils and the school's context. Clear end points enable pupils to build knowledge and skills progressively over time. Secure provision in phonics and mathematics provides secure foundations, while the wider curriculum helps pupils make meaningful connections across subjects.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development, including training in adaptive teaching and the graduated approach. This supports effective responses to pupils' diverse

needs and strengthens the focus on language development and vocabulary. Pupils are articulate, confident and increasingly independent.

Staff know pupils well and adapt learning effectively so that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum successfully. Leaders' refinements are relatively new and so are not yet embedded consistently.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for giving children the best possible start to their education. The early years curriculum is carefully designed and sequenced, helping children build knowledge, skills and vocabulary securely from their starting points. Ambitious leaders continually refine this work, starting from nursery. A clear focus on speaking and listening supports children's readiness for future learning, especially in reading.

Staff create a warm and nurturing environment where children feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Positive relationships help children develop confidence and independence. Throughout the day, adults typically promote language through meaningful conversations, effective questioning, modelling and repetition. Children learn new vocabulary and are encouraged to use it during play and group activities. As a result, children develop their communication skills well.

Reading is a clear priority, and children love to read. Children also develop secure foundations in mathematics. They learn to count, recognise patterns and understand concepts such as one more and one less, applying their knowledge in practical activities and play.

Staff identify gaps in learning early and provide effective support. Parents and carers value the care and education their children receive and work closely with the school. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared for Year 1 and the next stage of their learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a highly inclusive vision that is increasingly evident in practice. Everyone is welcomed, supported and valued. Leaders identify pupils' needs swiftly and ensure that appropriate support is in place from the outset. Effective systems help staff recognise emerging needs early, allowing barriers to learning to be addressed promptly and enabling pupils to participate fully in school life.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They work closely with parents, carers and external specialists to provide tailored support for individual needs. Families of vulnerable pupils speak positively about the care their children receive. These partnerships help inform provision, and leaders secure specialist assistance quickly when required.

Staff development is a key priority. Ongoing training equips staff with the knowledge and skills needed to support pupils with a wide range of needs, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons, staff use effective adaptations and inclusive strategies that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn successfully alongside their peers.

Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress, wellbeing and participation, reviewing support programmes and adapting them when necessary. However, the evaluation of the impact of interventions is not always consistently effective.

Additional funding is used thoughtfully to promote inclusion, develop language skills and remove barriers to learning. Leaders also ensure that all pupils can access clubs, visits and wider enrichment opportunities. Leaders' use of alternative provision is matched to the needs of individuals and is effective.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors share a clear and ambitious vision for the achievement and wellbeing of every pupil. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and use this knowledge to identify priorities that will make the greatest difference to pupils' outcomes.

Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of their actions and respond promptly when improvements are needed. Staff recognise that leaders deal effectively with emerging issues and place pupils' best interests at the heart of decision-making. This reflective and proactive approach supports a culture of continuous improvement across the school.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and provide both support and challenge. They understand the school's context well and maintain a clear focus on safeguarding, inclusion, attendance, wellbeing and pupil achievement. Positive relationships between leaders and governors help to drive improvement and support the school through change. Together, they work to reduce barriers to learning through investment in pastoral provision, inclusion, enrichment opportunities and targeted interventions for disadvantaged pupils.

Professional development is a key strength. Staff, including early career teachers, benefit from carefully planned training and support informed by evidence and good practice. Opportunities such as instructional coaching and behaviour management training help staff refine their practice and enhance learning experiences for pupils. Leaders also provide time for staff to embed new approaches and give careful consideration to wellbeing and workload. As a result, staff feel valued, supported and proud to work at the school. Their commitment and expertise ensure that pupils receive consistent, caring support and are well prepared for future success.

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

Pupils experience a warm and welcoming school where they feel safe, valued and included. From the moment they arrive, pupils are welcomed by caring adults and settle quickly into established routines. Staff know pupils well and build trusting relationships that help them feel supported. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of risks, including online and road safety, and know how to make safe choices.

Behaviour across the school is calm and respectful. Typically, pupils understand the school's expectations and follow routines confidently. They treat one another with kindness and respect and talk positively about the school's inclusive culture. Pupils explain that bullying is rare and are confident that staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively. They understand the difference between falling out and bullying and can describe how restorative approaches help resolve issues.

Pupils enjoy learning and speak enthusiastically about their experiences. They are engaged in lessons and discuss their learning with confidence. They particularly enjoy personal, social and health education because it helps them reflect, discuss important issues and understand themselves as well as others. Pupils talk maturely about healthy relationships, equality, protected characteristics, and different faiths and beliefs. They are keen to share their views and appreciate that leaders listen to pupil voice and act on their suggestions. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in school life. Staff understand pupils' needs well and provide thoughtful support. This enables pupils to build confidence, develop independence and participate alongside their peers.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of opportunities beyond the classroom. They value trips to places such as Shakespeare's Globe, Wimbledon and Newhaven Fort, as well as musical performances at Glyndebourne. Pupils enjoy and value clubs, including football, basketball, karate, drama, choir, cooking and golf. Leadership roles, such as being a prefect, digital leader, eco-leader and play leader, help pupils develop responsibility and make a positive contribution to school life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure monitoring and impact of interventions is rigorous and consistent so that vulnerable pupils progress well and any barriers to success are effectively addressed.
- Leaders should ensure that curriculum and teaching improvements are fully embedded and implemented consistently across subjects and phases so that all pupils, including in writing, develop secure knowledge, skills and fluency, with improved outcomes in handwriting, transcription and spelling.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Susan Halliwell.

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 head of school, the deputy headteacher and the inclusion manager, who is also the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke with a range of staff during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant changes in leadership and staffing.

The school currently makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Helen Smith

Lead inspector:

Gareth Flemington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian Waine, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Prentice, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

255

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

210

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

5.45%

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: 26.3%

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

1.96%

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

10.98%

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).

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	75%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	86%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	88%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	73%	Above

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	81%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

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	45%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	45%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	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 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	45%	68%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	45%	78%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	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.

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)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.2%	5.9%	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)	8.9%	13.0%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	16.2%	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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