

Gatehouse Primary Academy

Address: Secmaton Lane, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0LW

Unique reference number (URN): 141353

Inspection report: 24 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.

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. They have developed a comprehensive, high-quality programme informed by pupils' needs and the context of their lives. It broadens pupils' experiences beyond their immediate environment and builds aspirations for the future. Leaders adapt the programme to ensure that it has a positive impact on the knowledge and skills that pupils need. The programme begins in early years, where it successfully supports children's personal, social and emotional development.

The personal development programme is highly effective in ensuring that pupils are knowledgeable about risk, safety and maintaining healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is responsive to pupils' needs and the local context. Pupils' recall of learning from the personal, social and health education curriculum is notable and equips them well for life beyond school.

Leaders and staff provide pupils with excellent pastoral support. Pupils talk enthusiastically about awards and celebrations that recognise their achievements, both academic and personal. This fosters a strong sense of self worth and belonging, strengthened further by the positive relationships staff build with pupils.

Pupils value the leadership roles they can hold and take them seriously. They appreciate the voice these roles give them in shaping their school. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a deep understanding of diversity and individuality. This is reinforced through learning about core values, including fundamental British values, and through pupils' active demonstration of these values.

The school provides a rich set of creative, artistic and cultural experiences. These include performances, sporting festivals, residential trips and enrichment days. This aspect of the school's provision has a significant impact on pupils' lives, including those who may be disadvantaged. Leaders ensure all pupils can access the full range of enrichment opportunities.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school's emphasis on inclusion is reflected in its positive impact on pupils' attendance and behaviour. Positive relationships and effective pastoral support encourage pupils to attend regularly. Expectations for attendance are established in early years. Leaders at all levels track and analyse attendance patterns closely. Where attendance falls below expectations, leaders target support and make successful adaptations for pupils and their families to encourage higher attendance.

Pupils generally behave well throughout the school day. They understand staff expectations and respond positively and respectfully. In lessons, pupils typically demonstrate purposeful

attitudes to learning and work well with each other. They play and socialise positively at breaktimes. When incidents of challenging behaviour occur, staff manage them calmly and sensitively. Leaders respond to any incidents of bullying promptly and effectively, taking appropriate action to ensure that pupils feel safe and supported. They make effective use of restorative and reflective strategies to help pupils regulate their emotions and understand the impact of their actions. Pupils and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's behaviour approach. As a result, pupils typically express positive views about behaviour and trust staff to manage concerns well.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a welcoming early years environment. Staff identify individual needs quickly when children start school and use this information to design a provision that offers meaningful learning opportunities through both child- and adult-led activities. The outdoor environment extends children's learning through purposeful play and well-considered activities. The early years curriculum develops children's knowledge and skills across all 7 areas of learning. Staff provide memorable experiences, such as hatching chicks and build positive working relationships with parents and carers.

Leaders understand the importance of developing pupils' language and communication. Teachers and support staff engage children in high-quality interactions that extend learning, build independence and encourage curiosity and problem solving. This prepares children well for the demands of key stage 1.

Teachers design adult-led activities that secure children's basic knowledge and skills, including in personal, social and emotional development and in developing gross and fine motor skills. Reading is a key focus across the school and in Reception children learn to read using phonics. Staff provide extra support for children who need it, helping them keep up with their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting an inclusive culture across the school. They have an accurate understanding of pupils' diverse and often multiple needs and use this knowledge effectively to ensure that barriers to learning are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders have taken decisive action, including establishing key staff roles and providing targeted training. As a result, staff have the skills and knowledge needed to support vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Pastoral care is particularly effective in meeting pupils' emotional needs so that pupils are ready and motivated to learn.

Leaders and staff draw on a wide range of information and, where appropriate, external expertise. Work with the virtual school ensures that pupils in care or known to social care benefit from coordinated support that helps them succeed. Parents and carers engage meaningfully with the school's provision and generally speak positively about the support their children receive.

The school uses additional funding well to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. These strategies have contributed to improved attendance for some pupils and better engagement

and attainment for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels have a clear vision for the school. They have taken purposeful action to address key priorities. Recent leadership changes have quickly established a focus on areas that fall below expected standards. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's context and use this knowledge to inform decisions, particularly in their inclusive approach. This ensures that pupils, including those who face barriers to learning, develop confidence and integrity. Leaders are tenacious in securing external support where needed so that pupils receive the best possible pastoral care. This includes building strong links with families.

Professional learning for staff is planned in line with school priorities and supports improvements across the school. Staff, including those at the early stages of their teaching career, feel well supported. Leaders give due consideration to workload and wellbeing. The trust, alongside the hub board, provides appropriate support and challenge and maintains oversight of safeguarding and statutory responsibilities. It gains the assurances needed about the quality of the school's provision to focus on areas that will make the best difference to pupils at the school.

Leaders recognise where further work is needed to improve how well pupils secure important skills in English and mathematics, particularly writing and how closely learning builds on pupils' starting points. They understand where actions need to embed further so that impact can be fully realised.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in published outcomes over time. However, leaders' actions are beginning to make a positive difference to national test and assessment results. In 2025, achievements in writing and reading were more closely aligned with national averages. Vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are increasingly successful in the outcomes they achieve. However, pupils working beyond age-related expectations in reading and mathematics do not consistently secure the standards they should.

Leaders' work to strengthen pupils' foundational knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet having sufficient impact on pupils' writing accuracy. Even so, pupils are becoming more fluent and confident readers and are developing a love of reading. They also show increasing speed and accuracy in number recall. Leaders have taken steps to strengthen pupils' progress through the curriculum and their preparation for the next key stage so that all pupils can achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils do not develop some important foundational skills, particularly in writing, as well as they need to. Leaders' focused work on spelling, punctuation and handwriting has not had sufficient time to secure the impact required. Errors and misconceptions persist over time in pupils' recorded work across the curriculum. However, other fundamental skills prioritised by leaders show more positive impact, such as early reading and number fluency. Phonics is typically delivered with consistency and mathematics learning is well structured to support fluency, reasoning and problem-solving.

There is not enough precision in how teachers build some pupils' knowledge from their starting points. As a result, learning is not always adapted well enough. For some pupils it is too challenging to access successfully, while for others it does not provide sufficient challenge.

Leaders have designed an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum across core and wider subjects. They have ensured that staff have the subject knowledge needed to teach it well. Pupils' recall of learning in the wider curriculum is notable. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make links across subjects and describe how the curriculum design helps them know and remember more, for example through regular recapping of previous learning.

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

Pupils' sense of belonging at Gatehouse Primary Academy is clearly evident. They feel safe, included and valued within the school community. They know that staff look out for them and relationships between pupils and staff are characterised by kindness and respect. Pupils generally attend well and the school's clear emphasis on inclusion helps create an environment where they feel supported, which has a positive impact on their attendance.

Pupils speak positively about the social, emotional and academic opportunities the school provides. The variety of roles of responsibility give pupils a voice in shaping their school. A rich range of experiences broadens pupils' horizons and prepares them to be positive members of their communities.

Pupils value the time given to celebrate their successes and achievements, such as through assemblies and the house system. Pupils, including children in early years, enjoy school. They engage positively in play and learning and benefit from clear behaviour expectations and rewards that reinforce good choices. Typically, pupils are confident that staff respond appropriately when others struggle to manage their behaviour, including in rare cases of bullying.

Pupils' achievement in national tests over time has not been as high as it should be. Pupils do not consistently secure important early skills, particularly in writing. However, more recently, pupils show the increasing impact of leaders' work to strengthen those skills that underpin learning across the curriculum, such as reading and writing. They have frequent opportunities to practise reading and writing across subjects. Pupils learn well across the

wider curriculum and make links across subjects. Staff identify pupils' needs and barriers to learning quickly and use strategies to support learning so that all pupils learn as well as they can. At times, teaching does not match pupils' starting points closely enough, leaving some pupils unchallenged or without the adaptations they need.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed the impact of their work and the work of staff, to develop and secure pupils' important foundational skills, particularly in writing.
 - Leaders should strengthen teachers' expertise in adapting learning so that more pupils can learn successfully from their starting points.
 - Leaders should continue to drive forward school improvements to embed secure and consistent practice across all areas of provision.
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About this inspection

This school is part of First Federation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Walmsley.

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 head of school, the assistant headteachers, the family support worker, school staff and leaders from the trust during the inspection. In addition, the lead inspector spoke with the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the hub board, members of the trust board and the trust's chief executive officer in a video call.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The head of school and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator are new in role. The leadership team has changed in personnel and structure. Pupil numbers have fluctuated and are currently increasing.

Head of school: Jason Stephens

Lead inspector:

Leanne Thirlby, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew Shirley, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah McGinnis, His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

316

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

420

Above 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)

32.28%

Close to 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

4.75%

Close to 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

15.51%

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	54%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	51%	60%	Below

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	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

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	66%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	66%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	71%	Below

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	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	66%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	53%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	24%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	42%	44%	Close to average

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	55%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	53%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	49%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	58%	Close to average

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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average

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	39%	68%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	53%	69%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	24%	67%	-44 pp
2022/23 (final)	42%	66%	-24 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	53%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	80%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	78%	-20 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	49%	78%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	41%	78%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	77%	-30 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	79%	-26 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	63%	79%	-16 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)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	15.5%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.7%	16.2%	Close to average

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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