

Rockcliffe CofE School

Address: Rockcliffe, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA6 4AA

Unique reference number (URN): 112258

Inspection report: 9 September 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to their learning, typically achieve well. They make positive progress from their starting points. As a result, published outcomes of national tests are broadly in line with pupils nationally. Pupils rapidly learn to match letters to sounds in phonics sessions. Leaders ensure that pupils who struggle with their phonics knowledge catch up quickly. Pupils secure important mathematics knowledge. For example, they develop fluent recall and application of times tables facts. In subjects beyond English and mathematics, pupils learn a broad body of knowledge and typically recall this over time. In French, for example, pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of the vocabulary and grammatical structures that they have learned. While pupils typically achieve well in their writing, some pupils do not accurately and consistently apply their handwriting skills and spelling knowledge to their writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders develop effective processes that enable them to swiftly identify patterns or issues around pupils' attendance. Leaders show determination in improving the attendance of pupils who do not come to school as regularly as they could. They work proactively with parents and carers to identify the key barriers that pupils face in attending school. Leaders ensure that tailored support helps tackle these barriers. As a result, rates of persistent absence for pupils have reduced. Pupils' attendance is generally in line with national averages.

Pupils behave very well at this school. They are keen to learn and consistently follow the rules. Pupils have positive attitudes to lessons. They engage well with the wider opportunities that the school offers. Leaders embed effective processes to support pupils in managing their behaviour. Staff and leaders help pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Staff provide personalised support to pupils who face particular barriers in managing their behaviour. Pupils learn effective strategies to help them cope with a range of different emotions. Leaders are alert to any unkind or discriminatory behaviour, including bullying. Across school, there are embedded processes that ensure this is tackled swiftly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum across a wide range of subjects. Overall the school's curriculum is clear and well sequenced. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders consider the mixed-age class structure in key stage 1 and 2 when deciding the order in which pupils will learn key concepts. This ensures that pupils' learning builds logically over time.

Overall, staff teach the curriculum well. They provide clear explanations to pupils, checking that pupils have understood new learning before moving on. Staff adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils who face barriers to their learning can successfully access learning in

lessons. They provide personalised resources or additional adult support to help pupils understand and apply new knowledge.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop the essential knowledge and skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. They have strengthened the writing curriculum to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting and supported staff to develop the expertise needed to deliver these changes effectively. However, there is some variation in how well embedded the school's new approaches to teaching spelling and handwriting are across the school. This limits the impact of these approaches on enabling pupils to consistently apply their handwriting and spelling skills.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders are aspirational for all pupils, regardless of their starting points. They use a range of strategies to identify the barriers that pupils face in their academic and personal development. Leaders then work in collaboration with parents, carers and outside agencies to help staff to understand and meet pupils' needs. They make clear decisions about the support pupils need in school. For example, leaders make sure that additional funding has a direct and positive impact on the pupils it is intended to support. Leaders ensure that specialist resources and targeted support programmes help pupils when they face additional or significant challenges.

Staff develop typically appropriate support plans for pupils who face barriers to their learning. These plans identify strategies that staff use to help pupils to succeed. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support they need to be able to access learning alongside their peers. However, leaders have rightly identified that, on occasion, the targets on pupils' support plans lack precision. This makes it difficult for leaders to ensure that the curriculum is closely focused on securing pupils' learning and achievement. Leaders are beginning to make refinements to these plans to further strengthen their effectiveness.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear vision for the school, rooted in an aspiration for all pupils to flourish. Recent developments in processes and practices further strengthen the school. For example, persistent absence among pupils has reduced. The refinements to the teaching of mathematics and phonics are embedded. Leaders have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths, and aspects that would benefit from ongoing development. They consistently make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Leaders, including governors, are vigilant in checking that their actions have the intended impact.

The school's governors are knowledgeable. They fulfil their roles and statutory duties effectively. Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education in the school, maintaining clear oversight of the safety of pupils. Leaders and governors also have due regard for the wellbeing of staff. They consider the impact on staff's workload when making strategic decisions about the school. Leaders ensure that staff develop the expertise they need. They provide staff with specific training linked to their roles, the needs of pupils and the current priorities of the school. Leaders are also proactive in seeking out opportunities for staff to collaborate with staff in other schools.

Leaders and governors engage well with parents, carers and the wider community. They consider their views, working in partnership with them for the benefit of pupils and the school as a whole.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the personal development programme is broad and age-appropriate. It builds on pupils' understanding over time. Pupils learn about positive relationships. They also have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe both on- and offline. For example, pupils learn about water, road and railway safety. Pupils know the importance of maintaining their physical health. They talk about the risks of a poor diet and an inactive lifestyle. A range of extra-curricular clubs promote physical activity. Other clubs explore how to follow healthy recipes. Leaders make careful adaptations to ensure that all pupils can access the full personal development programme. This means all pupils can participate in the wider school offer. This includes a range of trips and other experiences beyond the classroom.

Leaders and staff prioritise the wider development of pupils. They carefully consider any barriers to pupils' wellbeing. Tailored support helps pupils who may be experiencing any difficulties. Staff provide nurturing pastoral support. Pupils cherish this. This has a consistently positive impact on how they feel.

Staff teach pupils about the positive impact they can have in the school and in the wider community. Pupils relish the opportunity to take up leadership roles and help others. They are proud of the difference they make. For example, pupils raise money for local charities. They also make a positive contribution to the local community through litter picking in the local area and singing at the nearby residential home.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand and embody the school's values. Pupils also develop their understanding of the British values. They gain an understanding of acceptance and equality, including an awareness of different religions. They are highly respectful towards others and value one another's uniqueness. This was summed up by pupils' comments such as, at this school, 'everyone is perfect in their own way'.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders identify and implement changes to strengthen the quality of the early years provision. However, some of these changes are very early in their development. The curriculum for Reception children identifies clearly the key knowledge they will learn. However, this is not the case for nursery-age children. In some areas of learning, staff are not clear about what children should learn over time. This means that there is variability in how effectively staff support children to deepen their learning.

Children across the early years provision access a range of engaging activities that link to all areas of learning. Staff interact positively with children. They engage children in two-way

conversations as they play. Phonics teaching is skilful. Children in Reception quickly become confident to match letters to sounds.

Staff build positive relationships with children. Children are happy and secure at school. They show positive friendship and interactions with their peers. Children independently follow the routines and expectations. Staff work effectively with parents, carers and appropriate specialists to ensure that the provision meets children's different needs. This includes children who experience barriers to their wellbeing or progress. Staff ensure that all children can access the full range of opportunities on offer.

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

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. From the start of the early years, children develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to and help resolve any worries they may have. Pupils get along well together at social times and enjoy participating in group games. They show consistently high levels of care and respect for each other and for the staff. Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They strive to live out the school's values. Pupils behave well and learn in a calm and purposeful environment. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that staff deal with this quickly, should it occur. The emotional and wellbeing needs of pupils, including children in the early years, are met.

Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with attendance nationally. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. In the main, they develop their understanding across a broad and ambitious curriculum. Through effective support, pupils who face barriers to their learning achieve success. They make positive progress from their starting points. Pupils typically achieve in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. In Reception, recent developments to the curriculum mean that children access a range of engaging activities. They achieve well in their early phonics and mathematics skills. However, leaders are still developing the curriculum for nursery-age children.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents. They learn to play musical instruments and participate in a range of sports. Pupils also develop interests in engineering. For example, through opportunities to design, build and race toy Formula 1 cars at external events. Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal access to these opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge that nursery-age children will learn at each stage so that teaching effectively builds on what they know and can do from their starting points.
- Leaders should support staff to embed the new processes for teaching spelling and handwriting so that pupils can apply these skills more consistently.
- Leaders should strengthen the precision of targets in support plans for pupils who face barriers to their learning to ensure that the curriculum delivery consistently enhances the

achievement of these pupils.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Clemmie Mounsey-Heysham.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 September 2026.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with governors, the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. They also spoke with staff, pupils and some parents or carers. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Carlisle. Its last section 48 inspection was in September 2025. The school currently uses no alternative provision. The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2023.

Headteacher: Marie Jamieson

Lead inspector:

Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Rachael Alarcon, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

115

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 268

School capacity

145

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)

9.17%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

5.22%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

33.04%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	90%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24		46%	
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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		62%	
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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	
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)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
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 (3 term)	7.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.0%	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.

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

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