

Blatchington Mill School

Address: Nevill Avenue, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 7BW

Unique reference number (URN): 114606

Inspection report: 9 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school successfully fosters a strong sense of Blatch community, ensuring that pupils feel they belong. Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and primary schools, and by hosting a transition summer school, to identify pupils who may need additional help. As a result, pupils receive the right support as soon as they begin their education at the school. The same detailed focus applies when the school prepares pupils for further education, employment and training. Enhanced transition support helps pupils with additional needs to develop independent study skills and secure essential literacy and numeracy knowledge, which are critical for future success.

The school has developed an extensive and well-resourced programme of internal and external alternative provision to enhance pupils' education. Pupils who attend the school's own supportive alternative provisions receive highly effective support that helps them engage with learning and improve their attendance. The school ensures that pupils who need it study accessible alternative qualification pathways. This enables them to achieve suitable qualifications that they can build upon in post-16 education.

Effective staff professional development ensures that staff know how to make well-chosen adaptations to teaching. Teachers use accurate pupil information well to ensure that pupils receive the right support. Pupils with education, health and care plans receive expert assistance, including external professional support if needed, helping them achieve their personal and academic goals. The school ensures that additional funding for pupils in receipt of pupil premium is used to remove barriers to education effectively.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Published data indicates that, overall, pupils consistently achieve well in national examinations, including in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training. In a small number of subjects, achievement at key stage 4 is uneven. Leaders know which departments need further support to ensure that pupils achieve equally well across all subjects.

Many pupils are progressing through the intended curriculum and meeting curriculum aims. However, at times, differences in the effectiveness of checks on learning lead to some variation. This is evident in the accuracy of the work that some pupils complete in some lessons.

When pupils attend well, they achieve successfully. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the achievement of pupils who attend less well is inconsistent. Poor attendance is having a more significant impact on

the overall achievement of vulnerable pupils in school because, more typically, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is much lower than that of their peers.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a cohesive and carefully sequenced curriculum to ensure that pupils learn in a structured way. The school regularly updates the curriculum to keep it relevant and responsive to pupils' needs, for example by helping pupils to develop essential literacy and numeracy skills.

In many subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well. When the curriculum is expertly taught, teachers present information clearly, enabling pupils to learn rich vocabulary and use subject-specific terminology accurately. Pupils who need additional help receive effective support to read and write with fluency. Teachers adapt their teaching well so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can learn successfully. They use teaching strategies that help pupils to understand complex ideas well.

However, in some areas, teaching is less consistent. At times, teachers do not check pupils' understanding of new content thoroughly. At times, pupils do not respond to in-the-moment feedback to improve their work or check their accuracy. This can limit pupils' understanding in preparation for the next lesson or topic.

Teachers check long-term retention of knowledge periodically and use this information to revisit topics in preparation for formal assessments. This ensures that pupils have acquired the knowledge needed for success at formal assessment points.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors are resolute in their ambition for pupils to excel and thrive. Significant challenges since the last inspection, including a devastating fire, have affected how quickly some aspects of school improvement could be realised. Leaders have prioritised and successfully implemented many important changes to improve academic outcomes for pupils.

Leaders and governors regularly review the progress of the school so that actions are impactful, including recent improvements to attendance. Some aspects of this work still require more cohesive planning to ensure sufficient precision in reducing persistent absenteeism. Leaders commission external moderation of the school's work and act swiftly on impartial feedback to inform strategic planning.

Governors use their collective expertise to provide effective, supportive challenge. They are knowledgeable and well connected within the local community. They play an active role by building partnerships with professionals who can help make a positive contribution to the school. The school is outward facing. Leaders collaborate positively with other schools and professionals to share best practice. Outcomes from this work, for example support for autistic pupils, are having a positive impact on their everyday experiences in school. Parents typically speak highly of the positive relationships they build with staff to ensure their child receives a well-rounded education.

The school provides a research-informed development programme linked to school improvement priorities. Regular training contributes to a culture of reflective professional learning, enabling staff to take ownership of their development. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the professional culture that leaders have successfully created.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school ensures that pupils learn a well-sequenced personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Specialist staff deliver the PSHE education curriculum so that pupils receive clear and consistent teaching. The school adapts the PSHE education curriculum to address emerging issues and themes, for example, online safety. Pupils benefit from additional input through workshops with external agencies, including the police and health services, ensuring that learning is expert and relevant.

Pupils learn about global faiths, cultures and beliefs. They debate ethical issues in tutor time and engage with current affairs. Events such as 'Culture and Heritage Day' promote pride in identity and appreciation of diversity. Pupils learn about protected characteristics, and teaching on intersectionality raises awareness of the complex disadvantages that some people face. Carefully chosen texts, including refugee stories, broaden pupils' perspectives on the challenges faced by people from different backgrounds.

Pupils contribute positively to school life. Older pupils mentor younger peers and support their learning. Pupils raise funds for charities and take part in activities that promote social responsibility, for example, collecting food for foodbanks. Pupil-led action projects help pupils understand the positive impact they can have on their community. Pupils develop important leadership skills to influence school improvements, including the design of facilities and social spaces.

A wide range of extracurricular clubs offers creative, sporting and wellbeing opportunities, with high participation across groups, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. The school uses additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils can access clubs, trips and visits fully.

Careers education is developing. Currently, the proportion of pupils benefiting from important experiences such as work experience is variable. The careers programme ensures that pupils encounter different providers of employment, education and training. Pupils receive impartial advice, with priority given to disadvantaged pupils. However, learning about different careers is not woven into the whole-school curriculum. This potentially limits how well some pupils understand how subject-based learning connects to future employment options.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Published attendance information indicates that pupils' attendance has declined over time, including among those who are vulnerable. The proportion of pupils who are persistently

and severely absent is high.

Leaders are taking more robust action to improve attendance than in the past. While there are early signs of positive improvement, pupils' attendance remains low, particularly for vulnerable pupils. Processes to improve pupils' attendance are not consistently embedded. As a result, some pupils and their families need further support to attend well and meet the school's high expectation of positive attendance.

Leaders have established a culture of high expectations for behaviour through the implementation of the school's 'Brilliant Blatch Behaviour' approach. Staff typically insist on high standards of behaviour. Consistent routines support pupils to make positive choices. Leaders use behaviour information effectively to identify trends and intervene appropriately, ensuring that pupils receive the support they need to be successful. Bullying is rare because pupils learn to treat one another with kindness and respect. Staff provide effective help to resolve pupil conflict.

Pupils who need focused help to manage their behaviour positively receive excellent support. Consequently, suspensions have decreased over time. Pupils conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner. They typically respond to staff requests, try their best and learn well in quiet, focused classrooms.

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

Pupils are very proud to be part of Team Blatch. Aspirations are high for all, both from dedicated staff and pupils themselves. Most pupils achieve well over time, including those who are disadvantaged. The school goes to great lengths to create an inclusive education that removes pupils' potential barriers to success. The curriculum is generally taught very well. Many pupils gain the knowledge they need for success in national examinations. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training.

Pupils' attendance has been low over time. This means some pupils are not benefitting from the enriching education that the school provides. The school works conscientiously with pupils and their families to support regular attendance. This means that an increasing number of pupils are attending on a more regular basis. Most pupils typically meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. This contributes to a warm and friendly school where bullying is very rare. Where needed, pupils receive effective targeted help to manage their behaviour and engage positively with learning. Pupils have trusted adults in school who can meet their needs. This helps pupils to feel safe and fosters a sense of belonging.

Pupils make an active contribution to the school community, for example designing outdoor seating areas for them to enjoy in social times. Pupils feel listened to and that their voice is important. Consequently, pupils are articulate and confident when speaking to adults and each other. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that extend their learning. Clubs such as Blatch Green Team and the Samba band help pupils develop new interests and talents. Staff carefully monitor participation to ensure all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, benefit from all that school has to offer.

Next steps

- Leaders must continue to strengthen and embed a coordinated attendance strategy so that pupil attendance continues to improve and persistent absence reduces, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring these pupils attend school regularly and engage with education well.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff carry out precise, routine checks on pupils' learning so that teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions can be addressed quickly.
 - The school should ensure that the careers programme provides pupils with suitable experiences and the detailed knowledge that they need to make ambitious and informed decisions about future education, employment and training options.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is James Tulley.

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 school leaders, teachers and governors during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority.

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 uses 17 alternative providers, including 12 that are unregistered.

The school also provides alternative provision for pupils from other schools in the Brighton and Hove local authority through the Alternative Learning Provision.

There have been changes in governance and leadership since the last inspection. The school has appointed several new governors, including a new chair. It has also expanded its leadership team by appointing 2 assistant headteachers.

Headteacher : Kate Claydon

Lead inspector:

Michelle Payne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Scott Norman, Ofsted Inspector

Wendy (Martin) Martin, Ofsted Inspector

Owen McColgan, Ofsted Inspector

John Vennart, Ofsted Inspector

Keith Pailthorpe, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,635

Well above 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

1,650

Well 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

21.28%

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

1.77%

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

13.94%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

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)	61.9%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	61.3%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	49.8%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	51.0	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	52.4	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	49.7	46.3	Close to average

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)	0.30	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.03	-0.03	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' 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)	34.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.2%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	28.6%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	38.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.7	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	38.3	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.04	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.49	-0.57	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' 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)	34.8%	53.1%	-18.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	41.2%	53.1%	-12.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	28.6%	52.4%	-23.9 pp

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)	38.4	50.4	-12.0
2023/24 (final)	41.7	50.0	-8.3
2022/23 (final)	38.3	50.3	-12.0

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)	-0.04	0.16	-0.20
2022/23 (final)	-0.49	0.17	-0.65

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)	95%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	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)	11.4%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.6%	9.0%	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)	32.5%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	27.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.3%	26.5%	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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