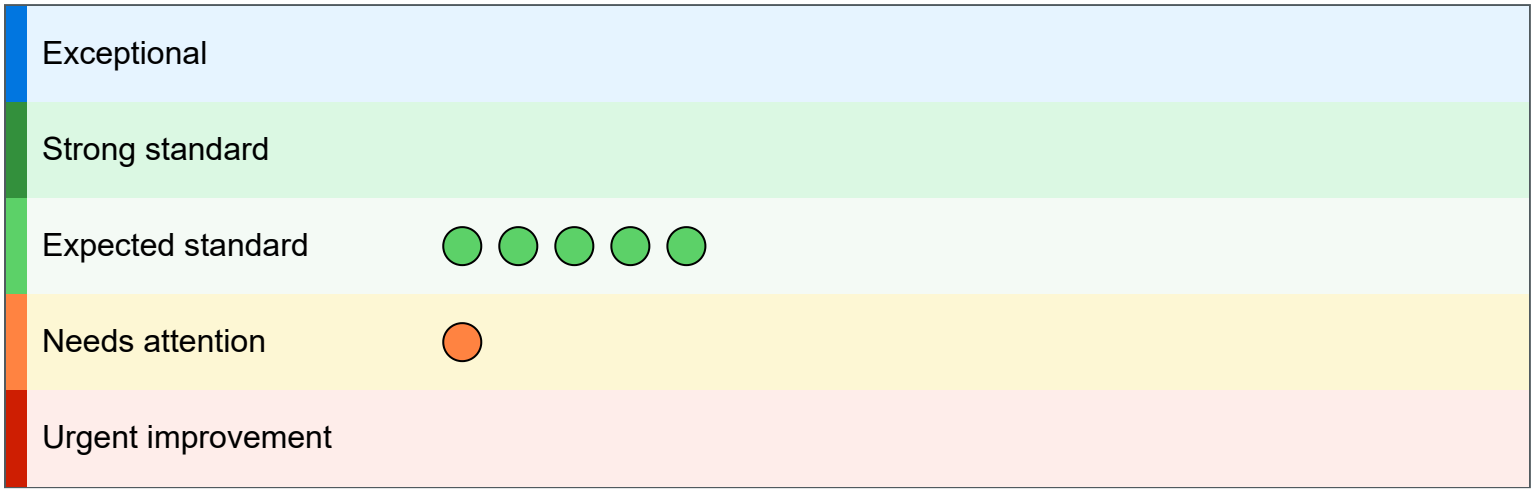
The Hastings Academy

Address: Rye Road, TN35 5DN

Unique reference number (URN): 136401

Inspection report: 13 January 2026



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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have clear and effective systems to support attendance, which are applied well. They track pupils' attendance meticulously and follow up any concerns promptly and thoroughly. Staff work closely with pupils and their families to remove any barriers to regular attendance, drawing on external professional support when needed. As a result, attendance is rising for all groups and persistent absence is declining. The school's work to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a particular strength. This includes pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and at social times. They respond well to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. Staff generally apply the school's behaviour-related policies well. The school environment is routinely calm. Lessons are settled and purposeful. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and a clear understanding of the rules and routines. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils are typically kind and courteous. When incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, leaders act quickly to address them. When behaviour falls below expectations, staff support pupils to reflect and improve. Consequently, suspension rates continue to reduce.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have taken effective action to improve the curriculum. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. The ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum maps out the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. This means teachers are confident that they are teaching the right things in the right order.

Staff receive effective professional development. Consequently, the curriculum is generally taught well. Staff use their subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and model learning effectively. Typically, staff know pupils' needs well and make appropriate adjustments to ensure that they can access the curriculum successfully. Staff generally use assessment to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions, although some variation remains in how systematically this is done. As a result, adaptations for pupils with specific barriers to learning are not always precise enough.

Leaders and staff are particularly aware of those pupils who have not yet secured the key knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. They generally take suitable action to address this. Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well-considered support to develop their communication and language skills. Pupils at an earlier stage of learning to read receive effective support to catch up.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school promotes an inclusive culture in which pupils are supported to overcome the challenges they face. Leaders identify pupils' needs promptly and accurately, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. This information is shared effectively with staff so that support is well matched to pupils' circumstances. Leaders monitor the academic and personal development of vulnerable pupils closely, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders' focused approach has contributed to improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Staff receive appropriate training to help them understand how to adapt teaching and provide the right support. Leaders work productively with external agencies to secure additional expertise when needed. Effective relationships between staff, pupils and families underpin the school's work. The emphasis placed on pupils' social and emotional wellbeing, alongside the school's 'hub' provision and strengthened pastoral support, helps pupils feel secure and valued.

Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used thoughtfully to support disadvantaged pupils. Alternative provision is used appropriately and only when in pupils' best interests. Leaders maintain close communication with providers so that pupils' safety, welfare and progress remain under the school's careful oversight.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders' work is driven by a strong moral purpose. They demonstrate high ambition for every pupil, including those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face other barriers to their learning. Leaders and staff understand the barriers that may affect pupils' personal or academic development. They ensure that decisions are made in pupils' best interests. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in, and able to benefit from, every aspect of school life.

Governors and trustees understand their roles well and meet their statutory duties. They provide leaders with effective support and challenge and share the school's commitment to inclusion. Governors' work is informed by their clear understanding of the community's needs.

Leaders know their pupils and their community well. They have a sharp understanding of what works well and where further improvement is needed. They focus their efforts on the right aspects to ensure that the school continues to move from strength to strength. For example, leaders' focus on improving attendance, reducing suspensions and strengthening teaching is targeted and effective. Leaders evaluate the impact of their actions systematically. They communicate priorities clearly so that everyone understands their own contribution to the school's success.

Staff, including early career teachers, benefit from a coherent programme of professional learning. They are proud to work at the school and appreciate leaders' thoughtful approach to managing their workload and supporting their work-life balance.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is well considered. Leaders and staff work well together to provide effective pastoral support for pupils. This means that there is always help on hand when pupils need it so that they feel cared for.

There is a well-designed personal, social and health education programme which, overall, develops pupils' knowledge effectively. For instance, pupils learn about keeping themselves safe in the community and online. They develop a secure understanding of how to take care of their mental health and wellbeing, including age-appropriate relationships and consent. Pupils learn about different faiths and religions. They recognise the importance of fairness, the rule of law and the importance of concepts, such as democracy in their own lives. Pupils treat one another with respect, value individual differences and listen to each other's views.

Leaders give careful consideration to the wider opportunities and activities available to pupils. These broaden pupils' experiences and develop their talents and interests. They include a wide range of trips, visits and clubs. Leaders track participation carefully to ensure that all pupils have access to these opportunities.

Pupils benefit from taking on meaningful positions of responsibility. For example, pupils may serve as members of the school council or act as peer mentors. Roles such as these help pupils develop character, confidence and leadership skills, while contributing positively to the school community.

Pupils benefit from the careers advice and guidance they receive. They are well informed about their next steps in education, employment and training. This is the case for all pupils, including the most disadvantaged. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who access the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, are well prepared for life after school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Historically, pupils have not achieved well. Outcomes in national examinations have been below national averages. Leaders strive for the best for pupils and are taking decisive steps to address weaknesses. Their actions are beginning to have a positive impact. Consequently, pupils currently in the school are building their knowledge and skills with greater security than in the past. More pupils now progress well through the curriculum and are better prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

There is more work to do on closing gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, the quality of some pupils’ handwriting and presentation remains inconsistent. Leaders have raised attainment for significant groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Gaps are beginning to narrow. Leaders are focused on ensuring their strategies to improve pupils’ learning and achievement become embedded across the curriculum.

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are disadvantaged, appreciate the improvements in the school in recent years. Pupils benefit from strong relationships with caring and committed staff, which ensure they are known and celebrated as individuals. Pastoral support is closely matched to pupils’ needs. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. When concerns arise, for example, relating to bullying or discriminatory behaviour, they trust staff to resolve them quickly. Pupils learn the importance of respecting difference and promoting equality. This helps them to develop a strong sense of belonging.

Leaders and staff have made significant improvements to the school’s culture and ethos since the last inspection. Consequently, most pupils behave well. In lessons, they typically work with focus and purpose so that classrooms are calm and orderly. This creates an environment that supports successful learning. Pupils attend more regularly than in the past. Those who find regular attendance more difficult are successfully supported.

Historically, pupils have not achieved well. Leaders have raised expectations for pupils’ academic success. For example, they have strengthened teaching and provided clearer guidance for staff. These actions are having a positive impact on pupils’ learning. Pupils recognise that their school is now a better place to learn. However, there remain some inconsistencies in how effectively the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils’ needs.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that broaden their horizons. Pupils with SEND and those who face other barriers to learning are fully included in school life. They participate alongside their peers in a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as chess, volleyball and book club. Pupils are proud of the responsibilities they take on, including roles on the school council or as peer mentors. A culture of care and teamwork is evident across the school. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

• Leaders should use their robust oversight and analysis to ensure that strategies to improve pupils’ learning and achievement are embedded and lead to swift further improvements where needed.
• Leaders should ensure that teachers use ongoing checks on pupils' learning consistently well to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' specific needs, so that they overcome barriers to learning.

About this inspection

This school is part of University of Brighton Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Blackman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Siobhan Denning.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the principal, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trustees and two other trustees, the interim CEO who is also acting as the governance professional for the trust. She also met with the chair of the local governing board.

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.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

The school has a specially resourced provision pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This caters for up to 10 pupils with a primary need of speech, language and communication. At the time of this inspection, 11 pupils were accessing this resource.

Principal: Simon Addison

Lead inspector:
Louise Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Paula Sargent, Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Hodges, Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Smith, Ofsted Inspector
Charles Joseph, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

808
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: 1,067

School capacity

900
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.79%
Well above 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

1.86%
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

24.13%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	27.0%	45.2%	Below
2023/24	23.1%	45.9%	Below
2022/23	14.7%	45.3%	Below

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	38.0	45.9	Below
2023/24	33.4	45.9	Below
2022/23	30.3	46.3	Below

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	-1.29	-0.03	Below
2022/23	-1.48	-0.03	Below

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	10.0%	25.6%	Below
2023/24	10.1%	25.8%	Below
2022/23	10.3%	25.2%	Below

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	28.4	34.9	Below
2023/24	25.4	34.6	Below
2022/23	24.4	35.0	Below

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	-1.68	-0.57	Below
2022/23	-1.48	-0.57	Below

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	10.0%	52.8%	-42.8 pp
2023/24	10.1%	53.1%	-43.0 pp
2022/23	10.3%	52.4%	-42.2 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	28.4	50.3	-21.9
2023/24	25.4	50.0	-24.6

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	24.4	50.3	-25.9

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	-1.68	0.16	-1.85
2022/23	-1.48	0.17	-1.65

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	85%	91%	Below
2022 leavers	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers	87%	94%	Below

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 terms)	10.5%	8.1%	Above
2023/24	15.7%	8.9%	Above
2022/23	18.5%	9.0%	Above

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 terms)	32.5%	21.9%	Above
2023/24	45.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23	50.0%	26.5%	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.

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