

Ofsted's accreditation visit to Purple Ruler

On 14 and 15 October 2025, Ofsted visited Purple Ruler as part of the [Online Education Accreditation Scheme](#). Through this scheme, providers of full-time online education to school-age children in England can apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for accreditation.

Ofsted visits providers to find out whether they meet the minimum standards for online education set by the DfE (the standards). This report sets out what we found during our visit on 14 and 15 October 2025. You can find out whether this provider is accredited by the DfE at [Get Information about Schools](#).

Key findings

- **Purple Ruler meets all the minimum standards** for online education.
 - Since the previous accreditation visit, leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the full breadth of curriculum areas required by the Online Education Accreditation Scheme standards are in place. Detailed schemes of work support the curriculum for all subjects and ensure children systematically develop their knowledge and skills. Leaders recognise the need to further support pupils with lower literacy skills by identifying, more clearly, the systematic development of spelling, punctuation and grammar in English schemes of work.
 - Amendments to the complaints procedure ensure it meets requirements. The complaints procedure now includes appropriate provision for appeals and the management of complaint records.
 - A significant strength of Purple Ruler is the support that staff provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers' subject expertise and their effective use of assessment information ensure that each pupil receives carefully tailored, individualised teaching that meets their needs.
 - Staff help pupils to reignite their spark for learning through positive professional relationships and the provision of a calm and nurturing online environment.
 - Communication with those who commission places for children at the setting is a strength. Consequently, commissioners feel well-informed about their children's progress. Parents typically like how Purple Ruler helps their children to engage with learning. However, some would like more information about the upcoming curriculum content to help them to prepare their children to learn.
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Who is this online provider?

- Purple Ruler is an online education provider, based in Liverpool. It delivers full-time education to pupils aged 11 to 16 years who reside in England. The provider's company also runs separate online tutoring and summer school programmes for children from other countries, such as the United States of America.
- Purple Ruler operates as a short-stay provision for pupils who find it difficult to attend registered schools. Nearly all pupils have SEND, such as extreme anxiety, which prevent them from engaging in education in a physical setting. Purple Ruler aims to support these children to re-engage in learning and return to full-time registered schooling as swiftly as they can.
- Purple Ruler's curriculum is based on the English national curriculum, and leaders have ensured that the schemes of work are detailed and take account of the provider's online context. They have designed the setting's curriculum to be inclusive and meet individual pupils' needs. Schemes of work are ambitious and take account of national qualifications. However, in the English scheme of work, the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar is less clear. Consequently, the teaching of this key element is not as well coordinated and is overly reliant on individual teachers' expertise.
- Many pupils start their time at Purple Ruler on reduced timetables. However, as they overcome their anxieties and gain in confidence, pupils expand their studies to include more subjects.
- Currently, 32 school-age pupils study with Purple Ruler full time. One of these pupils has an [education, health and care \(EHC\) plan](#). All 32 live in England. Another 229 school-age pupils study with Purple Ruler part time.

How are pupils taught at Purple Ruler?

- All classes and activities at Purple Ruler are undertaken live. Staff are always visible during lessons, as their cameras are always on, and pupils are actively encouraged to turn on their cameras whenever appropriate and/or possible. This helps children develop positive relationships with adults.
- Staff teach pupils in a mixture of group classes and single-pupil tutor groups. Specialist teachers, who have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, deliver lessons to groups of no more than six pupils. While most pupils join teaching sessions from their home, some pupils receive additional individualised teaching while attending their registered physical school, or while in hospital.
- Teaching takes account of pupils' individual needs and strongly promotes self-motivation and confidence. A core strength of the setting is the way staff meet pupils' individual needs and interests. Strong professional relationships between

staff and pupils, including the effective use of praise and rewards, help to inspire positive engagement in learning.

- Teachers routinely check pupils' knowledge and understanding through the skilful use of questioning and other assessment strategies. Teachers use the information they gather to amend and individualise their curriculum plans and teaching to take account of individual pupils' interests and to meet their needs. As a result, pupils, irrespective of their needs, receive sequences of lessons that help close gaps in their knowledge and build understanding and confidence to succeed in the subjects they study.
- Teachers make effective use of technology to bring learning to life. Through the careful choice of high-quality resources, and the implementation of additional training regarding how to teach in an online environment, teachers make their lessons engaging and interesting.

What are Purple Ruler's arrangements like for keeping children safe?

- **Ofsted's visits to online providers can give only a limited level of assurance on the effectiveness of safeguarding, compared to our inspections of schools and other providers of face-to-face education and training.** However, we found that the arrangements for keeping children safe at Purple Ruler are appropriate.
- Safeguarding is a priority at Purple Ruler, and leaders are aware that many of their pupils are some of society's most vulnerable. The designated safeguarding lead is well trained and demonstrates secure and up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. The setting's policy is up to date and pays due regard to the current guidance from the Secretary of State. Leaders have established rigorous and robust recruitment processes. These include completion of all recommended checks to help ensure the suitability of all adults who work with children, including those who work from outside of England. Before being allowed to work with pupils, leaders provide new staff with a comprehensive induction procedure that includes additional safeguarding training. Additionally, leaders deliver frequent safeguarding updates to all staff. This maintains their knowledge and vigilance to help protect pupils.
- Leaders ensure that Purple Ruler's computer systems are well protected from malicious activity. Appropriate filters protect and shield pupils and staff from online threats. Additional software that controls who has access to pupil information prevents the unauthorised exportation of data from Purple Ruler's systems.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of possible risks to pupils and staff and have implemented appropriate procedures to promote health and safety. They keep risk assessments under constant review to ensure mitigations are effective in reducing risks.

What do pupils and parents and carers think about Purple Ruler?

- Pupils who spoke with the inspector, or who responded to the online questionnaire, painted a positive picture of Purple Ruler. Pupils said they find the teachers helpful. They explained that teachers' use of pupils' interests in lessons helps them to understand more difficult concepts and make learning fun. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident to work online at Purple Ruler because of the online safety training they receive. Some pupils would welcome more opportunities to undertake more practical subjects but recognise the limitations of the setting being based online.
- Parents and commissioners who spoke with the inspector, or who responded to the online questionnaire, were typically full of praise. Parents described how teaching at Purple Ruler had positively impacted their children. Parents particularly liked the positive professional relationships and care exhibited by staff that encourage children to engage in their education. This is exemplified by comments such as 'tutors are very responsive to my child's needs and keep them engaged in learning' and 'they make [my child] feel at ease... [when learning]'. However, some parents would like to receive more information about what is to be taught in advance, so as to help them support their children's learning.
- School leaders who place pupils at Purple Ruler expressed their praise regarding the ease and effectiveness of communication between the school and the setting. This included the regular opportunities for physical and online meetings with Purple Ruler's leaders.

About the visit

- This is Purple Ruler's second accreditation visit. John Nixon HMI was the lead inspector.

Compliance with the DfE's standards for online education

This section reports on how well Purple Ruler meets the standards for online education. It is included primarily for the benefit of the DfE, to help inform their decision whether to accredit Purple Ruler.

Purple Ruler meets all of the applicable standards for online education set out by the DfE. The standards that are not applicable to Purple Ruler are listed below.

The full list of standards can be found in [DfE's guidance on meeting the online education standards](#).

Section 1. Quality of education provided (curriculum)

The provider meets all the standards in section 1 of the standards.

Section 2. Quality of education provided (teaching)

The provider meets all the standards in section 2 of the standards.

Section 3. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provider meets all the standards in section 3 of the standards.

Section 4. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provider meets all the standards in section 4 of the standards.

Section 5. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The provider meets all the standards in section 5 of the standards.

Section 6. Provision of information

The provider meets all the standards in section 6 of the standards.

Section 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The provider meets all the standards in section 7 of the standards.

Section 8. Quality of leadership in and management of the service

The provider meets all the standards in section 8 of the standards.

Standards that do not apply to this provider

The following standards do not apply to this provider:

- **Standard 1.8** only applies where the provider has at least one full-time pupil of above compulsory school age
- **Standards 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18** only apply where the provider uses supply staff
- **Standard 6.3** only applies where a provider has a governing body

Contact details for Purple Ruler

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