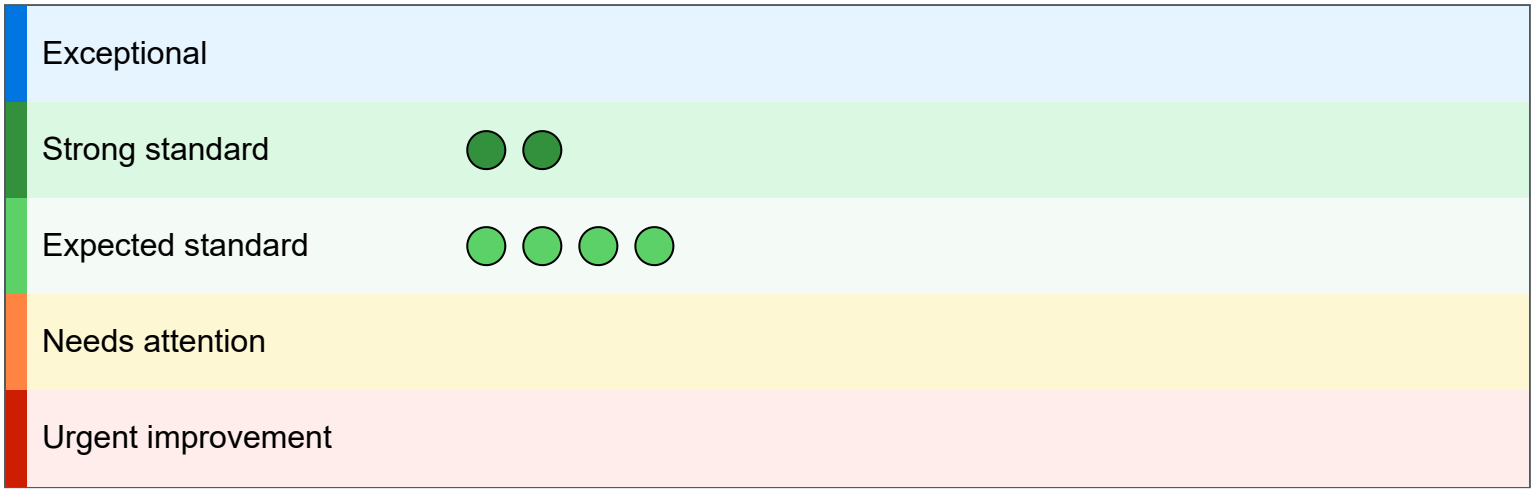
Copper Fields School

Address: Delaware Road, Drakewalls, Gunnislake, Cornwall, PL18 9EH

Unique reference number (URN): 151205

Inspection report: 3 February 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.
- Insufficient evidence: Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils' attendance significantly improves at the school. This includes those pupils whose attendance was previously very low in other settings. Pupils attend because of the highly positive culture leaders create. Pupils feel a real sense of belonging in a setting where they are successful. Staff tailor experiences to pupils' interests, such as cooking in the school kitchen. This personalised support helps pupils want to come to school. Leaders maintain precise oversight of attendance. They identify and address barriers swiftly. This targeted work results in attendance that is high, and above the national average.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff understand and consistently implement these. They act as positive role models and foster a culture in which pupils do not experience bullying or discrimination. Staff explicitly teach and reinforce consistent routines. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure knowing what is expected of them. They learn in a calm and orderly environment. Pupils flourish. When pupils struggle to manage their emotions, staff notice early signs of this. Staff act quickly with well-considered strategies. This ensures that pupils' needs are understood, supported and well met.

Inclusion

Strong standard

The school has a deep understanding of pupils' needs and barriers to learning. This begins before pupils' arrival through a thorough transition process. Leaders work closely with pupils, parents and wider professionals. This ensures pupils are given all the support they need to settle in well and get off to a positive start.

Therapeutic support for pupils is woven into the school's daily practice. Staff benefit from purposeful professional learning, particularly in communication approaches. These are fully integrated into the school's work. For example, training around signing and the use of visuals results in a consistent approach to communicating with pupils. This enables pupils to express themselves well, including those who are nonverbal. They benefit from personalised routines and communication strategies that help their voices to be heard.

Leaders have highly effective systems to check pupils' progress closely. Leaders monitor the impact of the support pupils receive. Regular reviews ensure pupils do well with their education, health and care plan outcomes. The school makes adjustments if progress is slower. This includes ongoing training for staff.

The school has highly effective partnerships with external professionals. It liaises closely with social care professionals, such as the virtual school. This ensures that vulnerable pupils receive the right support at the right time.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Many pupils arrive at the school with significant gaps in knowledge. The school identifies these quickly. This enables pupils to achieve well from their individual starting points. As pupils move through the school, they work towards a range of academic qualifications. This helps to prepare them well for their next stage of education.

The school prioritises the development of language and communication. Therapeutic support and communication strategies are consistent and effective. This means pupils typically build the knowledge and confidence needed for their next steps. It includes those who are nonverbal.

Staff provide regular, purposeful opportunities for pupils to practise new language. Examples are songs, rhymes and high-quality interactions. The curriculum is carefully ordered so pupils generally build their foundations in English and mathematics in manageable steps. Many pupils benefit from revisiting important content to secure key concepts. However, sometimes pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise and apply their learning, particularly in writing and number fluency. As a result, sometimes the progress they could make through the curriculum is slowed.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The ‘Copper curriculum' sets out clear pathways for pupils. These are appropriate to their stage of development and needs. The curriculum has been carefully ordered. As a result, staff are clear about what to teach and when. The curriculum is ambitious. Learning generally builds on what pupils already know and can do. Staff make careful adaptations to ensure learning activities meet pupils’ individual special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They ensure staff benefit from regular training to develop subject knowledge and expertise. As the school grows and new staff join, leaders ensure the training is the same. This promotes consistency in teaching. As a result, pupils typically experience a well-delivered curriculum. Their needs are well supported.

The school promotes a love of reading. For example, author visits, ‘star reader’ and ‘drop everything and read’ sessions inspire pupils to appreciate literature. The school supports pupils well in preparing them for the more formal stages of learning to read. For example, pupils develop their awareness of sounds in the environment.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

The proprietor maintains clear and effective oversight of the school. This ensures that leaders are well supported and appropriately challenged to deliver the school’s vision, ethos and strategic direction. The proprietor makes sure the school is compliant with the independent school standards. It ensures the school’s practice develops as it grows.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context, strengths and priorities for development. They have worked cohesively to support the school's successful opening and the phased admission of new pupils and staff. Leaders adapt the staffing structure carefully as the school grows. They ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. Leaders continue to refine their approaches to meet the cohort's changing needs.

Leaders model high expectations and are readily available to help staff. Staff value this highly and feel well cared for by leaders. Ongoing professional learning is wide-ranging and responsive to need. This draws on expertise, such as from the clinical team. Training includes targeted areas such as the use of sign language to improve communication and practice across the school. Leaders ensure new staff develop their expertise alongside more-established staff.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the difference the school has made to their child. They appreciate the secure partnership with staff and the meaningful contribution they can make to supporting their child's success in school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils. These develop their independence, life skills and preparation for adulthood. As the school continues to grow and welcome more pupils, leaders further refine and extend this offer. Education and clinical staff work together to plan and deliver the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They ensure it is responsive to pupils' prior experiences and needs. This includes for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils grow in confidence as they learn to communicate with increasing independence. For example, they choose their own meals at lunchtime and work alongside the school chef to design healthy and nutritious meals. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world. They receive age-appropriate relationships education.

The school's 'Wider World Passports' broaden pupils' experiences and expose them to new opportunities. For example, they take part in ecological projects, such as promoting recycling around the school. They get help to travel on public transport. Pupils learn the importance of helping others and making a positive contribution to the community. For instance, the school raised money for a local animal centre through a school car wash. Pupils supported local and national charities by designing and creating decorations to sell at the school's Christmas market. Pupils develop their understanding of citizenship. Pupils engage in national events that develop their knowledge of national heritage, for example making poppies for Remembrance Sunday. This also enhances their understanding of fundamental British values, such as mutual respect.

The school supports pupils well with effective careers advice and guidance. From the earliest stages, pupils are introduced to a variety of jobs. They learn about people who help them, such as doctors and police officers. Younger pupils dress up in a range of uniforms so they recognise these professionals. Older pupils take on responsibilities around the school. Through this, they develop their knowledge of the world of work and life beyond the school.

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

Copper Fields School is a welcoming and happy place in which to learn. Pupils are part of a nurturing community where every individual is known well and valued. Many have experienced disrupted or negative educational journeys before joining the school. Staff take the time to build trusting relationships with pupils and to understand their needs closely. Pupils settle quickly and receive the support they need to succeed. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and benefit from a calm, respectful environment. Leaders resolve any bullying concerns quickly.

Pupils learn to recognise their strengths and to feel proud of who they are. Each day begins positively. Staff greet pupils warmly and help them settle into school routines. Communication and language development is at the heart of the school. Pupils are given the tools they need to communicate well, including those who are nonverbal. Pupils trust that staff will help them if they have any worries. This helps them to feel safe and secure.

The school's 'Copper Culture' is woven through daily life. Pupils explore the values of 'creativity, opportunity, perseverance, potential, equality and respect' in depth. They understand how these support their success. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements during 'Copper Time'. This daily activity gives them opportunities to reflect on their achievements. They feel proud of their own successes.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences to prepare them for life beyond the school. For example, they visit local shops, cafes and churches. This promotes a sense of belonging to the community. Pupils are encouraged to contribute, including through pupil-led clubs such as chess. They develop their interests and friendships. Parents and carers speak highly of the difference the school makes to their child's life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching expertise is developed. This will support pupils to get more opportunities to apply and extend their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and a representative from 2 local authorities. The lead inspector also spoke to representatives of the proprietor.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is operating as a special school to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for: social, emotional and mental health needs; moderate learning difficulties; severe learning difficulties; specific learning difficulties; sensory and/or physical needs; autism; and speech, language and communication needs.

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

The school address is Delaware Road, Drakewalls, Gunnislake PL18 9EH.

The school is registered for 60 pupils between the ages of 4 and 16 years. The school currently has 26 pupils on roll.

This is the first standard inspection of the school since it registered with the Department for Education in December 2024.

The name of the proprietor is P Bloom Ltd.

The fees currently charged are £67,890 - £97,890.

The school's email address is info@copperfieldsschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Chris Clements

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

---

1. Quality of education provided Standards met

All standards have been met.

---

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Esther Best, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Gavin Summerfield, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 3 February 2026

Total pupils

26

School capacity

60

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

26

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

26

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.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright