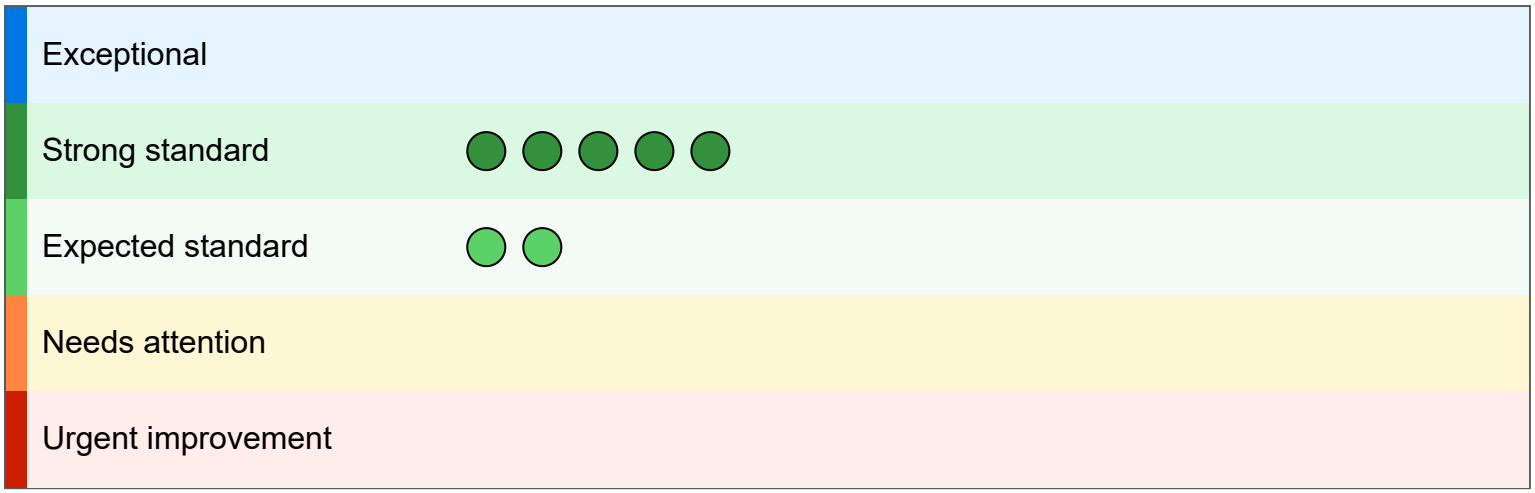
Nightingale Community Academy

Address: Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London, SW17 7DF

Unique reference number (URN): 143175

Inspection report: 21 April 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.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils make excellent progress from often low starting points. Many pupils arrive at the school with significant gaps in their learning. Pupils can also be low in confidence and have difficulty managing their emotions. Over time, they build secure foundations in reading, mathematics and wider knowledge. They recall learning with increasing confidence and apply skills with increasing independence.

Success looks different for individual pupils, but everyone is enabled to make progress and gain meaningful outcomes, whatever their starting point. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

Academic outcomes, while positive, do not reflect the full extent of what pupils achieve at this school. Pupils learn to communicate effectively with each other, different adults and new people. They learn to recognise and manage their emotions with increasing self-awareness. Many overcome their fears about coming to school and learn to value education. All of this helps pupils participate successfully in society, access learning and move on to college, training, supported internships or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders place attendance at the centre of the school's work. They approach it with strategic care, patience and determination. The school team helps pupils rebuild trust in education and coming to school. Leaders listen carefully to pupils and their parents or carers. They take time to understand their concerns. Together, they create personalised plans that help pupils to attend more regularly and for longer periods of time. They do this through adapting start times, building connections between home and school and adapting the curriculum, enrichment and therapy offer. The impact of this work is very positive. This school has high attendance compared to other similar schools. Many pupils with a long history of non-attendance make significant improvements.

When pupils come to this school, their behaviour improves. Pupils here struggle with emotional regulation, mental health concerns and negative past experiences. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to meet these needs. Staff take a proactive and consistent approach. They help pupils recognise their emotions, manage reactions and reflect on their choices. Staff address bullying, discrimination and unsafe behaviour swiftly and effectively. Staff listen to pupils and act when concerns arise. This builds trust. High levels of supervision and clear routines create a calm and predictable environment. Movement breaks, safe spaces and sensory support help pupils to thrive. As a result, pupils engage positively. They also demonstrate respect for others and pride in their learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard

All pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and face significant barriers to their learning. A high number of pupils are disadvantaged or receive

support from social care. Many pupils arrive at the school having had long periods out of school or difficult experiences in their previous settings.

Leaders use careful methods to identify pupils' needs and work with families and professionals to understand each individual's starting points. They use this information to make personalised plans to help pupils make progress. Staff use these plans effectively, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are carefully tracked, and individual plans are updated to reflect what works best. This helps provide a calm, consistent and personalised approach for all pupils. Classroom staff work with a therapy team to help pupils meet targets outlined in their education, health and care plans and to make lessons more accessible. Support is different for each pupil but can include different resources, help with reading, movement, speech and language therapy and understanding sensory needs.

The school supports disadvantaged pupils and uses funding effectively. It responds creatively to existing and changing needs. For example, providing a later start to the school day, help with transport or uniform, professional advice and the use of alternative provision help to re-engage pupils in learning and school. Alternative provision is carefully chosen, well monitored and keeps pupils connected to the school community. Staff work with vulnerable pupils and families during school holidays and at home to maintain support and help them feel that they belong.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Trustees, governors and school leaders have clear and well-thought-through ambitions for the school. Pupils’ best interests are front and centre. Leaders understand pupils’ complex needs and prioritise pupil safety, inclusion and long-term outcomes in all their decisions. They have designed systems that rebuild stability, belonging and engagement so that pupils can thrive.

Leaders have a very clear understanding of what will benefit pupils most and take quick and effective action to make improvements. For example, they have redesigned curriculum pathways and behaviour and attendance systems to better support pupils. Staff understand the reasons for change and apply systems consistently. As a result, pupils experience calm classrooms and improved behaviour and attendance, and they achieve well.

Governance is effective. The trust provides oversight through systematic reporting and review cycles. Governors know and understand their responsibilities and engage closely with school leaders. The trust and governors offer robust support and challenge. They also use external audits and work with schools across the trust to review and share good practice. Leaders respond swiftly to safeguarding concerns, incidents and complaints. They ensure that lessons are learned from past concerns and that these are used to strengthen systems further.

Leaders recognise the emotional demands on staff. They take considered steps to support and develop staff. They ensure that training is purposeful and helps to build staff confidence, skill and consistency. As a result, staff feel valued and professionally well developed, and they enjoy their work.

Leaders work well with parents and carers, the local authority, health services and local employers to improve safety and support and to secure pupils' next steps.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have set a clear vision that safety, wellbeing and learning go hand in hand. They ensure that all pupils benefit from this by considering how to make it accessible to everyone, including those pupils with different levels of understanding. Staff share this vision and work tirelessly to develop pupils' knowledge. This means pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and to be successful members of society, irrespective of their challenges.

Leaders have carefully planned a programme that sequences key knowledge over time from the primary to the post-16 provisions. Through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum, pupils are taught the statutory and recommended content, including aspects of community responsibility and the fundamental British values. Leaders also carefully monitor local contextual risks and patterns of behaviour and adapt lessons and assemblies to address any emerging local concerns. For example, they use workshops to address knife crime and exploitation or recap ideas around respect and the law when pupils use discriminatory language.

The school's relationships and sex education meets pupils' needs and experiences. They learn about healthy relationships, consent and respect. Pupils learn about both online and offline risks to their wellbeing and how grooming works. They practise how to manage peer pressure and stay safe in the community. This means pupils can recognise risks, feel confident speaking to trusted adults and ask for help.

Pupils are well prepared for adulthood. Pupils develop independence, confidence and readiness for life beyond school. Careers education builds year by year through visits, work experience and guidance. Pupils learn about independent travel and how to plan journeys, write personal statements, make applications and practise interviews.

The school ensures that pupils benefit from many enrichment opportunities that both enhance the curriculum and extend pupils' experiences and confidence. These include attending residential trips, theatres and museums and taking part in sporting events.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have taken a clear strategic approach to curriculum and teaching. They are rightly embedding consistent practice and sharper delivery across all classes. Leaders have redesigned learning to prioritise regulation, engagement and readiness to learn. This recognises that many pupils arrive with experience of disrupted education and high emotional needs. The curriculum focuses on embedding reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils. These core skills sit alongside practical learning. Subjects such as farming, construction and catering support pupil engagement and connect learning to real life and next steps.

Teaching supports pupils well. Staff are knowledgeable, explain learning clearly and adapt tasks carefully. Staff promote reading daily, using structured phonics when needed and carefully chosen texts. Pupils develop confidence and fluency as readers over time. Writing is a key focus, and younger pupils develop appropriate writing skills. This approach is less systematic for older pupils.

Teachers design tasks that enable pupils to practise and apply knowledge so that they remember it. Teachers notice mistakes pupils make and show them how to improve. On some occasions, teachers do not efficiently check what pupils already know. This means they spend too much time recapping knowledge that is already secure when they could move on to new learning sooner. Similarly, there are times when lessons do not start quickly enough, which can mean learning time is lost.

Post 16 provision **Expected standard**

Leaders provide clear direction for the post-16 provision. They have expanded the scope of the qualifications on offer and have ambitions to develop this even further. The curriculum is designed around students' individual needs, interests and starting points. Student progress is reviewed regularly, and personalised plans are adapted to meet changing circumstances.

Students typically achieve well from their starting points. They gain functional skills qualifications and vocational qualifications and resit GCSEs where appropriate. Many rebuild their confidence after earlier difficulties with education. Pupils stay engaged and take greater responsibility for their learning.

The curriculum is broad and engaging. Students can study subjects such as construction, land-based studies, catering and motor mechanics. Teaching is carefully planned and broken into clear, manageable steps by staff who know their subjects well.

Staff prepare students well for adult life through comprehensive careers guidance, work experience, application support and interview practice. Students visit colleges, training providers and workplaces. Most students progress to jobs, supported internships or further education. Many students take on leadership responsibilities in school and are good role models to the younger pupils.

Staff understand students' challenges and adapt timetables, routines and teaching approaches when needed. Therapists support with communication and wellbeing, and students learn to present themselves with confidence and maturity.

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

Pupils experience a calm, welcoming and friendly school. They are greeted every day by staff who know them well and notice how they are feeling. Pupils settle quickly because well-established routines and clear expectations make school life predictable and safe.

Behaviour is calm and respectful. Pupils are supported by staff who help them understand their complex feelings, manage problems and put things right. Breaktimes are well-

supervised social times where pupils have space to play games and engage in sport. Pupils can also choose to take time to be quiet and relax in social spaces. Older and younger pupils support each other with kindness.

Pupils find their learning manageable because classes are small and teachers explain things clearly. Pupils get help when they need it, including support with reading and writing. Over time, pupils develop confidence in their ability to learn and concentrate. They learn how to focus on tasks and take pride in finishing work.

At this school, pupils' achievement is about more than test results. Pupils make progress from very different starting points. Many arrive having missed a lot of school. Some find learning or being around others very hard. As pupils learn to manage their emotions and trust staff, their attendance and behaviour improve. This allows learning to build over time. Pupils gain qualifications that help and interest them.

Pupils and staff work together positively in this caring and purposeful school community where relationships matter. Pupils know that trusted adults, safe spaces and access to therapy are available when needed. Pupils learn about safety, friendships and choices. They talk openly about worries and know who to go to for help.

There are many opportunities to help pupils build their confidence outside of school. These include cultural and creative visits around London, sport, creative activities and practical learning such as farming, construction, cooking and mechanics. Pupils receive extensive careers advice and work experience so that they are very well prepared for the future.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to further develop consistency in teaching so that teachers confidently check what pupils already know and move learning on when knowledge is secure, and a more systematic and consistent approach to pupils' handwriting across all phases is implemented.

About this inspection

This school is part of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Valvona, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ray Leclercq.

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 the principal, other school leaders, teachers and the deputy CEO and chair of the local governing body during the inspection.

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 school is a special school that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions.

Principal: Sarah Brooks

Lead inspector:
Una Buckley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Helen Morrison, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

137

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.

School capacity

120

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

83.48%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

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).

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
2023 leavers (provisional)	89%
2022 leavers (revised)	79%
2021 leavers (revised)	85%

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
2024/25 (2 term)	26.8%
2023/24 (3 term)	19.7%
2022/23 (3 term)	27.3%

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	64.2%
2023/24 (3 term)	49.6%
2022/23 (3 term)	61.9%

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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