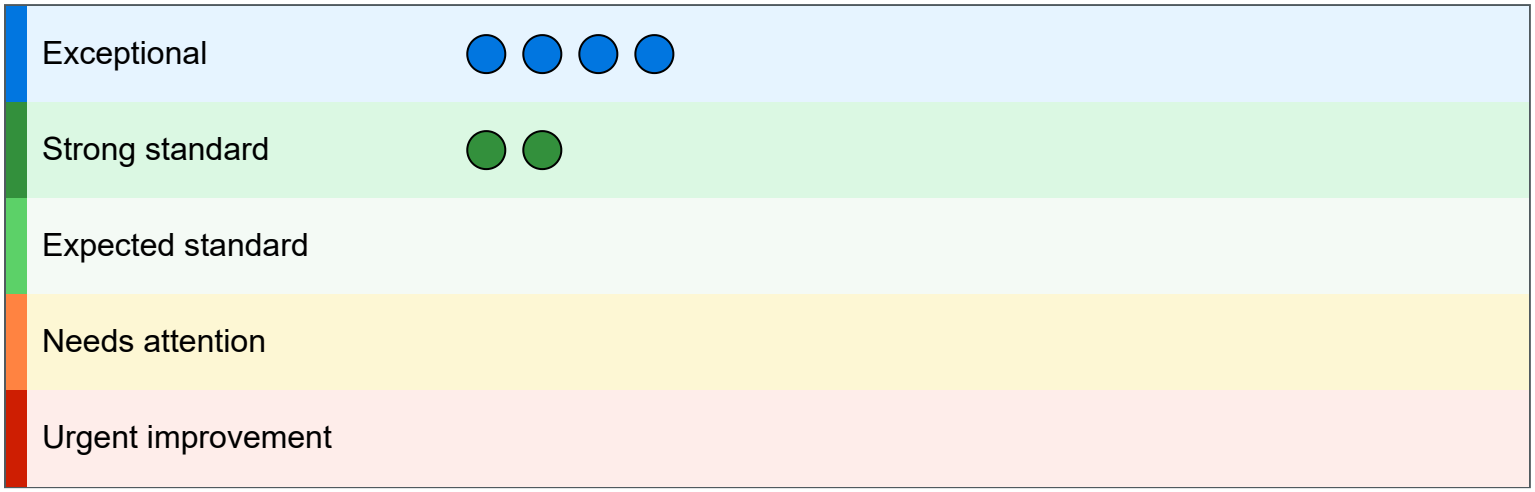
Hedgewood School

Address: Weymouth Road, Hayes, Middlesex, UB4 8NF

Unique reference number (URN): 102465

Inspection report: 6 May 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.

Exceptional

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional

Leaders track attendance extremely carefully. Consequently, they pick up on instances of non-attendance very quickly and take considered and impactful action. They focus closely on individual pupils and groups who need additional support. Specialist staff build deeply trusting relationships with families and take time to understand the specific challenges they face. They provide tailored and practical help, such as adjusted start times, transport arrangements and breakfast provision. This especially supportive and personalised approach is very successful. Attendance is high for a school with pupils with such diverse needs. Pupils who previously found it difficult to attend now come to school regularly. Disadvantaged pupils and those facing additional challenges attend consistently well.

Leaders have established an approach to behaviour that is analytical, consistent and highly effective. Staff interpret behaviour to understand what pupils need and set targets to steadily improve pupils' engagement. They adapt environments, teach pupils how to manage feelings and respond in calm, consistent ways. This leads to a sustained reduction in behaviour incidents over time. Pupils who once found it difficult to manage now learn successfully and take part fully in school life. Behaviour is very calm across the school. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and respond well to clear routines and expectations. Bullying is very rare and dealt with sensitively. Staff create an inclusive environment where differences are understood and respected. Pupils feel safe, build strong relationships and develop increasing confidence in managing their behaviour and interactions with others.

Inclusion

Exceptional

All pupils are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which vary widely from pupil to pupil. Leaders recognise this and make inclusion the foundation of the school’s work. They establish a highly personalised, research-informed approach that is applied consistently.

Leaders use detailed and responsive assessment to develop a precise understanding of each pupil. They draw on education, therapy and family knowledge to identify needs early and provide the right support. Staff use this insight to deliver carefully tailored provision that is reviewed and refined over time. This leads to considerable academic gains and progress towards education, health and care plan outcomes. For many, this includes moving from minimal communication to expressing ideas and opinions independently.

Staff work in a uniquely integrated way, seamlessly combining speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, behaviour expertise and individual targets in daily teaching. This is a key strength. Pupils successfully develop communication, movement and emotional control alongside their learning.

Leaders use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils very well. Support is closely matched to individual needs, including transport, specialist input and wider experiences. As a result, disadvantaged pupils participate fully and achieve as well as others.

Staff support pupils known to social care with considerable sensitivity and persistence. They maintain productive relationships with families and partners. This helps maintain pupils' wellbeing, security and engagement.

Leaders' coherent approach delivers sustained and transformative impact. Pupils develop independence, communication and confidence that extend beyond school. Families report lasting improvements in daily life, relationships and access to the community.

Leadership and governance

Exceptional

Leaders provide noteworthy strategic direction. They understand the school's strengths in depth and use rigorous, evidence-informed evaluation to shape priorities. Their approach to improvement is deliberate and purposeful. Leaders use detailed assessment, research and external expertise to identify what will make the greatest difference to pupils. For example, they have refined the curriculum and assessment systems to identify exactly what pupils know and can apply. This forensic approach ensures that actions are sharply focused and have sustained impact over time.

Leaders invest heavily in professional learning. Staff receive extensive, ongoing training aligned closely to pupils' needs. This includes communication, behaviour and therapeutic approaches, which staff apply with consistency and expertise. Leaders promote a culture of collaboration. Teachers, therapists and support staff work together as a unified team, ensuring that pupils benefit from joined-up, specialist support throughout the day. This develops expertise across the workforce and enables consistent, high-quality practice.

Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and manage staff's workload carefully. They design systems that are efficient and purposeful, allowing staff to focus on pupils rather than unnecessary tasks. Staff feel valued, supported and trusted. This leads to high levels of morale and strong staff retention.

Governors provide highly effective challenge and support. They fulfil their statutory duties with rigour and use their expertise to check leaders' actions are sustainable and have pupils' best interests at heart. They understand the school's work in detail and contribute to strategic decision-making, including complex issues such as site development and resource allocation.

Leaders engage extraordinarily well with families, professionals and the wider community. They build trusting relationships and work in close partnership to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They promote this work with clear vision, precision and consistency across the school. They design and implement a highly coherent programme that staff deliver seamlessly through lessons, routines and wider experiences.

Leaders deploy a skilled, multi-disciplinary team to meet pupils' needs. Teachers, therapists and behaviour specialists work closely together throughout the day. They plan and deliver

joined-up support that develops pupils' communication, physical coordination and emotional wellbeing. This integrated approach ensures that pupils receive consistent, high-quality support and make sustained gains in how they communicate, manage their behaviour and engage.

Staff teach relationships, sex and health education in ways that match pupils' needs and understanding. Even those at the earliest stages of communication can express choices, understand boundaries and show when something is not right. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe, including online safety, how to be around strangers and personal space. This builds pupils' awareness and helps them protect their own wellbeing.

Staff embed personal development through daily routines and enrichment. They use lunchtimes to teach self-care and social interaction. Staff run a wide range of clubs, including dance, music, gardening and sports. These help pupils discover what they enjoy and how to have fun. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to take on roles such as school council members, eco-warriors and play buddies, enabling them to contribute and support others.

Staff plan and adapt wider experiences carefully. They support pupils to access swimming, libraries, residentials and community activities as they become ready. Where needed, they bring experiences into school, such as theatre performances, mini zoos and visits from community services, including the police. This helps pupils build familiarity and prepare safely for real-life situations.

Staff provide consistently effective pastoral support and work closely with families to understand each pupil fully. This enables pupils to feel secure, build positive relationships and take part more fully in daily life. Over time, pupils develop resilience, social understanding and practical life skills. This work is deeply intentional, deliberate and very coordinated. It leads to meaningful, lasting improvements in pupils' wellbeing and access to the world around them.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve extremely well from their starting points. Achievement includes the development of communication, independence, behaviour and essential knowledge for learning and daily life. Foundational knowledge, such as early communication, reading, writing and number skills, is built carefully over time. This gives pupils the building blocks they need to access a wider range of learning.

Pupils make consistent progress across the curriculum, with small but important steps that lead to secure learning over time. Pupils start at very different points in how they communicate. Those at the earliest stages of communication learn to use gestures, pictures or symbols, which is significant progress. Others go on to use spoken language to express their preferences and apply reading, writing and mathematics in meaningful ways.

Many pupils are working below national expectations and are not entered for national tests or assessments. Leaders use detailed assessment to track and ensure sustained progress over time for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils make considerable progress from their starting points.

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps into secondary provision, with the skills, confidence and independence to continue learning successfully.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders provide clear and effective oversight of curriculum and teaching. They have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that reflects pupils' wide range of needs. Developing pupils' communication, independence and behaviour is central to this design. Leaders ensure that these are taught deliberately and systematically across subjects and daily routines.

The curriculum ensures pupils gain the essential knowledge and skills they need for learning and daily life. It prioritises communication, early reading, writing, mathematics and personal development. Curriculum plans set out clear steps of progression and link closely to pupils' education, health and care plan targets. This helps staff build learning securely over time.

Teaching is consistent and purposeful. Staff use shared approaches, such as clear examples, explanations and practical resources, to support understanding and independence. Therapeutic approaches are woven into lessons, helping pupils to develop key skills and access the curriculum. In English, pupils develop early writing through sensory mark making and fine motor activities. In subjects such as art and music, pupils explore materials, rhythm and expression to develop creativity and communication.

Leaders think very carefully about pupils' challenges in accessing necessary life experiences and thread these through the curriculum. For example, they consider pupils' ability to dress themselves or their ability to access visits to the dentist. These are broken down into small, manageable steps so pupils gain confidence over time.

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

Pupils thrive at this school because they are very well known and understood. They are treated with care and dignity by highly effective, knowledgeable and passionate staff. Pupils have multiple and varied needs that are extremely well supported. They are welcomed each day by adults who have a deep understanding of their individual needs. Pupils benefit from a careful handover from transport. They have time and space to settle, so they are ready for the day. Pupils attend regularly because they feel secure and want to be in school. They feel safe and know whom to talk to if they are worried.

Pupils get the support they need to behave very well. They build trusting relationships with staff and peers. Pupils are empowered to communicate their choices and needs in ways that suit them best. They learn to use these methods confidently in different situations and at home. This helps them be successful in school, family and community life. Moments when

pupils feel overwhelmed become less frequent over time. Pupils gradually learn to anticipate what makes them anxious and use strategies to calm themselves. Bullying is extremely rare. When concerns arise, staff act quickly to resolve them.

Pupils build knowledge step by step, through plenty of opportunities to practise and apply their learning. Pupils develop communication, reading, writing and mathematics knowledge alongside independence and problem-solving skills. Therapy is seamlessly woven into everyday teaching. This helps pupils develop communication, movement and self-control throughout the day. Pupils make significant progress from their starting points.

Pupils' lives are enriched through an extensive programme of clubs, visits and activities that are carefully matched to their needs. If pupils are not ready for community visits, experiences are brought into school first. Daily routines help pupils move towards independence. For example, at lunchtime, pupils learn to sit with others, try new foods and feed themselves. Pupils become more confident and take part more in everyday life. Pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary placements when the time comes.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should continue to refine their curriculum and assessment approaches so that teaching consistently secures deep understanding and leads to sustained, transformative outcomes for all pupils.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Andrew Fenlon.

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 co-headteachers, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, safeguarding leads, governors, including the chair, representatives from the local authority, teachers and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

It is a community special school. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulty.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

At the time of the inspection, there were 186 pupils on roll.

Co-headteachers : Bryony Smith and Pearl Greenwald

Lead inspector:
Una Buckley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Janice Howkins, Ofsted Inspector
Francis Gonzalez, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

189

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.62%

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

Well above 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).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

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 (3 term)	8.4%
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%
2022/23 (3 term)	10.7%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	30.6%
2023/24 (3 term)	28.9%
2022/23 (3 term)	36.4%

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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