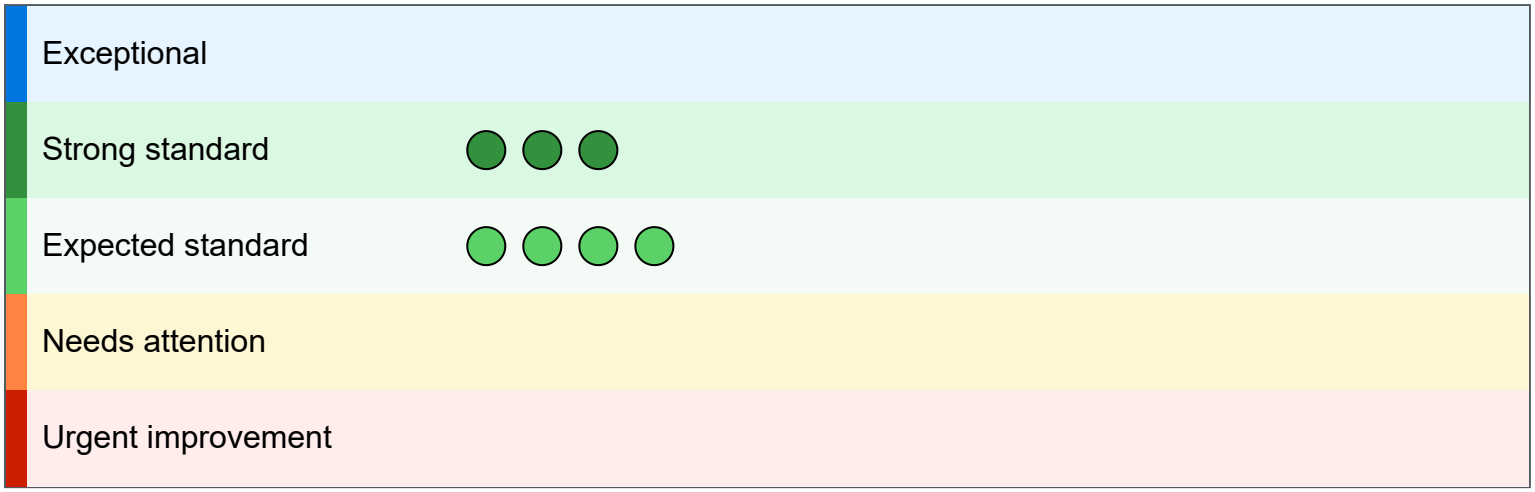
Dulwich Wood Primary School

Address: Bowen Drive, Kingswood Estate, West Dulwich, London, SE21 8NS

Unique reference number (URN): 100801

Inspection report: 15 September 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

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have designed an ambitious early years curriculum that gives children an excellent start to their school journey. Staff know children very well and work closely with families, settings and specialists to help them settle quickly. As a result, children feel safe and are ready to learn. Children and families benefit from highly effective transition arrangements. For example, carefully designed 'transition booklets' use photographs of learning spaces, familiar routines and helpful visuals to help children and families prepare confidently for starting school. Staff use consistent routines across the early years, while leaders work closely with other providers to give children the best possible start to school life.

Staff understand children's starting points and quickly identify additional needs or barriers. High-quality adult interactions develop children's imagination, communication and language skills. Staff carefully adapt their support so that children with additional needs learn successfully alongside their peers. Staff check children's learning precisely and address gaps swiftly so that children securely grasp learning.

Children develop their reading and language skills from the outset. Staff teach phonics with precision, enabling children to recognise sounds, blend words and apply this knowledge successfully. High-quality interactions develop children's vocabulary, communication and imagination. Children develop their mathematical understanding and physical skills through purposeful indoor and outdoor experiences.

Children benefit from clear and consistent routines that build their confidence and independence over time. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff combine nurturing care with high expectations. Consequently, children develop secure foundations across the curriculum, achieve highly and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that inclusion is a shared vision and a deliberate feature of school life. Pupils, including the youngest children, benefit from an effective transition programme that gives them a clear sense of belonging. A relentless drive to support every pupil underpins the school's highly inclusive culture. Pupils' needs are identified accurately and addressed promptly because leaders have established rigorous systems to check what pupils know.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of each pupil's needs. They have embedded effective systems so that staff work closely together to reduce pupils' barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. Staff understand pupils' needs well and refine provision to target support precisely where it is most needed. Teachers check pupils' learning and adjust their teaching in response to what they find. Pupils benefit from a coherent and responsive approach to support. Pupils who receive additional support close gaps in their knowledge rapidly.

The school has established highly effective partnerships with outside agencies to bring additional expertise to its work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with education, health and care plans, benefit particularly from this expertise. Leaders review the impact of pupils' plans alongside the funding provided to ensure that

pupils thrive academically and personally. Pupils who are disadvantaged also benefit greatly from the effective use of additional funding.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's highly effective personal development programme has a significant impact on pupils. Pupils benefit from rich, purposeful experiences that are woven through school life. Leaders ensure equal access to these opportunities for all pupils and evaluate the impact of the programme rigorously to strengthen provision even further. Consequently, pupils become confident, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are very well prepared for life and their next stage of education.

Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community. They take their leadership opportunities very seriously and elect their representatives through a well-understood democratic process. House captains support younger pupils and drive improvements identified by their peers. Pupils know their views are valued and that they can influence school life, including the planning of trips and activities.

Pupils develop a deep understanding of equality and the fundamental British values through the personal, social and health education curriculum. They understand the importance of democracy and mutual respect. From the early years, pupils consider diversity thoughtfully. They discuss different religions, cultures and beliefs with impressive maturity and respect. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of healthy relationships, consent and personal safety. They know how to stay safe online and offline and recognise the wide range of associated risks.

Leaders have created an inspiring, very well-maintained physical environment that extends learning beyond the classroom. Pupils explore science first hand in purpose-designed outdoor science laboratories. They also develop their creativity and artistic skills through a dedicated art studio and the expertise of a specialist artist.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through an extensive range of opportunities. Music, sport, a residential trip to Scotland, a community event and learning about financial planning broaden pupils' experiences and build their character. Leaders' well-planned experiences bring the school's values to life. Pupils articulate their learning confidently and understand its relevance to their lives. Pupils, including those who face additional barriers to learning, flourish because of the excellent pastoral care they receive.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders recognise the importance of pupils acquiring essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Children begin to develop these skills in the early years. Pupils develop their language and vocabulary from the outset. Outcomes at the end of the early years and in Year 1 phonics are consistently above national averages. Pupils learn well across subjects, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders' work to strengthen reading has improved pupils' fluency. In most subjects, pupils remember important content and connect this effectively with new learning. Typically, pupils achieve well. At the end of key stage 2, pupils have achieved broadly in line with national averages over time.

Leaders accurately identify where pupils could achieve even more. They recognise the need to improve pupils' number fluency, particularly their recall of times tables. Occasionally, pupils' writing, including their handwriting, is not as well developed as it could be. Overall, pupils have the knowledge and skills they need for future learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders promote the importance of high attendance and make it a key priority. Overall, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. This is also the case for different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or face other barriers to attendance. Leaders track attendance closely and take action when concerns arise. They use a wide range of strategies to help pupils overcome barriers to attending school regularly.

Leaders have created a calm, warm and nurturing ethos that permeates the school. Staff go out of their way to understand pupils' unique needs. They model respectful relationships and maintain high expectations. The school's values and approach to personal development reinforce this ethos. For example, pupils with social or emotional needs benefit from highly effective support and adjustments that help them manage their behaviour well. Pupils show very high levels of respect. They articulate their ideas confidently, listen carefully to others and challenge views respectfully. Pupils behave extremely well both in lessons and during breaktimes. Leaders respond quickly and effectively to the rare incidents of bullying or discriminatory behaviour, whether online or offline.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have clearly identified what pupils should learn across the curriculum from the early years onwards. They have a secure understanding of how effectively the curriculum is implemented. Teaching is generally effective. Staff are well trained, follow agreed approaches and typically check pupils' understanding during lessons.

Leaders successfully ensure that pupils develop secure basic skills and knowledge from the early years. Pupils learn to read confidently from an early stage. High-quality phonics teaching enables them to decode and blend confidently, giving them secure foundations for accessing the wider curriculum. In mathematics, established routines and additional support enable pupils to consolidate and remember essential knowledge. Leaders have recently revised approaches to teaching times tables to strengthen pupils' fluency further.

Leaders have created an effective 'learning toolkit' which 'builds pupils' learning power'. Pupils build their knowledge over time because leaders have clearly identified and sequenced curriculum content. Agreed teaching approaches enable pupils to develop their thinking and collaborative skills.

Leaders accurately identify where further improvement is needed. They recognise some variability in how consistently staff identify and address weaknesses in pupils' letter

formation and handwriting across key stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically learn successfully alongside their peers because staff carefully design the provision to meet their needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and those responsible for governance have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They recognise that the consistent implementation of agreed approaches across school life is essential to securing higher outcomes. Consequently, they have careful oversight and refine approaches where necessary.

Leaders have established a highly inclusive, welcoming culture. Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging in a school that provides an 'oasis' within its community. Leaders and governors make pupils' wellbeing a clear priority. Their 'open arms' approach, alongside an extensive range of activities and experiences, gives all pupils opportunities to thrive. Leaders prioritise high-quality provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make decisions in pupils' best interests.

A positive safeguarding culture permeates school life. Everyone understands their responsibility to promote pupils' welfare and act promptly when concerns arise. Leaders work closely with external agencies to strengthen the guidance and support available to families.

Leaders act decisively where improvement is needed. Their work to strengthen reading and oracy exemplifies this. Staff develop their expertise and strengthen their classroom practice through high-quality professional development, including external partnerships. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They gain first-hand insight into leaders' actions, provide professional challenge and hold leaders to account. They ensure that funding, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, is used effectively.

Leaders prioritise staff workload and wellbeing. Consequently, staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. Most parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and leaders' work.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this vibrant, respectful and inclusive school. They are proud to be part of this warm and welcoming community. Pupils feel they belong and experience a happy, safe and nurturing environment. Staff know them well and act quickly to reduce barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline. If bullying occurs, pupils are confident that this will be addressed quickly and effectively.

Most pupils come to school each day and behave well. They are polite, respectful and act with integrity. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and equality. Pupils know that if they have any worries, staff will listen to them and support them.

Pupils are confident and friendly. They embrace the school's values of being ‘creative, caring, confident and collaborative'. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well from their various starting points. They achieve particularly well in early reading and phonics, which gives them a solid foundation for future learning.

Children in the early years show high levels of respect for staff and each other. They achieve very well. Children benefit from the school’s clear and consistent routines and get off to a great start in their learning.

Pupils are generally taught well. They learn the intended curriculum and achieve in line with national averages at the end of Year 6. Younger children develop secure basic skills, especially in early writing. However, some older pupils do not develop sufficiently secure or fluent writing skills.

Pupils value the extensive range of clubs, trips, competitive sporting events and leadership activities that broaden their experiences. These include gardening club, running club, African drumming and playing the ukulele. Pupils see school as a fun place to learn.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop staff expertise so that teachers consistently develop pupils’ writing fluency, including secure letter formation, adapt their teaching effectively for pupils who need to catch up, and provide sufficient challenge for those who have already mastered key knowledge and skills.

About this inspection

The school is part of a federation called Dulwich Wood School.

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Taryn McLelland.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 15 and 16 September 2026.

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 and other senior leaders from the school during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the board, as well as a representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Helen Rowe

Lead inspector:
Matt Dineen, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Andrew Rigby, Ofsted Inspector
Robin Bosher, Ofsted Inspector
Nick Osborne, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

417
Above 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: 268

School capacity

420
Above 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.38%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

2.88%
Close to 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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.83%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	73%	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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	80%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	62%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	87%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	59%	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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	42%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	69%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	80%	81%	-1 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	47%	78%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	39%	78%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	77%	-32 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	62%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	87%	81%	6 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	79%	-18 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	45%	79%	-34 pp

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 (3 term)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	5.9%	Close to average

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 (3 term)	14.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.9%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.7%	16.2%	Close to average

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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