

# Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary School

**Address:** Ashwood Road, Parkgate, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S62 6HT

**Unique reference number (URN):** 140799

## Inspection report: 14 July 2026

|                    |                                                                                    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exceptional        |                                                                                    |
| Strong standard    |   |
| Expected standard  |   |
| Needs attention    |  |
| Urgent improvement |                                                                                    |

### **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 ●

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

As part of a well-considered approach to inclusion, leaders and staff adapt quickly to changes in pupils' needs. For example, the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased significantly in the last 18 months. Leaders have strengthened their approach to identifying and meeting the needs of these pupils, as well as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other vulnerabilities. Well-trained staff understand how best to support pupils from different backgrounds. Staff expertly incorporate adaptations and adjustments into their classroom practice. They ensure that provision swiftly removes any barriers to learning or wellbeing. Individual tailored support for pupils is timely and effective. For a small number of pupils with more complex needs, the school uses 2 registered alternative provisions at schools within the trust. Leaders have an appropriate oversight of this provision.

The impact of the school's support for disadvantaged pupils is worthy of note. Leaders use the funding they receive for these pupils to give them every chance of academic and social success. As a result, the attainment for disadvantaged pupils has consistently improved. Gaps in published outcomes between these pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers nationally are closing rapidly over time.

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils at this school benefit from a high-quality and well-implemented programme for their wider development. This is closely personalised to the school and to the lived experiences of the pupils who attend. The 'Ashwood Pledges' set out an offer to which all pupils are entitled. These provide experiences in citizenship, life skills and developing cultural knowledge. The wider offer builds pupils' spirituality, promoting an understanding of different beliefs, religions and faiths. Meaningful opportunities to contribute to the local foodbank or other charity and community groups help to foster a sense of social awareness and morality. Within the pledges, pupils develop a secure understanding of the fundamental British values and the protected characteristics.

Pupils express detailed knowledge of how to keep safe, both online and offline. They understand the dangers of illegal drugs, but maturely make comparisons as to how medicinal drugs can be helpful. Others talk about the dangers of online 'spoofing' and how to protect themselves from people who might pretend to be someone else. Pupils speak in detail about how stereotypes can 'give a false picture about something or someone'. They are knowledgeable about the importance of physical and mental health and the impact these have on a person's wellbeing. Pupils' appreciation of the school's relationships programme is equally secure. The personal development offer applies equally to all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Extra-curricular activities are deliberately planned to allow as many pupils as possible to participate in them.

The pastoral offer in school is of a high standard. Staff take the time to understand pupils as individuals, for example being sensitive to pupils' demeanour on entry to the school site each morning. Staff offer timely support when needed. Parents and carers appreciate this

aspect of the school's work. They speak positively about a 'nurturing, inclusive environment where their children can thrive'.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders acknowledge that pupils' outcomes over time have not been high enough. They remain committed to tackling any identified issues that may prevent this. Leaders and staff work together to improve elements of curriculum and teaching where needed. Their work is having a considerable impact. Across school, pupils' work shows a clear development of foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work is of an appropriate quality for their age. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

From what are often lower starting points, pupils generally make appropriate progress. In some cases, this progress is impressive. Disadvantaged pupils, for example, achieve highly. They outperform their disadvantaged peers nationally by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils are being increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, more recent improvements in the provision for phonics and reading are not reflected in published outcomes at the point of inspection.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders work strategically to continually improve aspects of the curriculum and teaching where necessary. For example, leaders recognise the importance of pupils developing a strong base of foundational knowledge to prepare them for reading. They acknowledge that the previous phonics programme was not having the desired impact. Leaders therefore made swift changes to this provision, ensuring a journey of continued improvement at the school. Staff training continues to be a crucial element in improving the teaching of phonics and reading.

Across subjects, appropriately sequenced curriculums set out the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to succeed. Teaching activities are typically well chosen to help pupils learn more and remember more. Staff are responsive to the needs of pupils and use assessment appropriately. For example, they recognise where pupils need to secure key knowledge in geography to understand how the River Nile supports agriculture, in order to prepare them for future learning. Where required, teachers adapt planning to secure this key knowledge and address any gaps in learning.

Subtle adaptations and adjustments are made in the classroom, which allow vulnerable pupils to be included in all learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged access an appropriate curriculum to secure their foundational knowledge to prepare them well for future learning.

## Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have high levels of knowledge and expertise in the early years. A detailed and high-quality curriculum has become the basis for effective teaching. Children typically make impressive progress during their time in the early years, from starting points that are generally very low on entry. Staff in the early years are highly skilled. They demonstrate a keen understanding of child development. They adapt curriculum content and learning activities to best suit the needs of children who attend from a wide range of backgrounds. The strong inclusive ethos across the school applies equally to the early years setting. Staff place a high priority on all children's welfare and wellbeing. Children are happy, safe and valued.

Children's development of language and vocabulary is a high priority. Staff show considerable expertise in modelling language. Children absorb this and use it in their own play, alongside their emerging phonics knowledge. For example, children use appropriate, well-developed communication and early writing skills to take orders for delicious 'ice creams' in the nursery café. Older children in the Reception Year join in joyously with well-known stories, recalling key story vocabulary. Children's writing at this point in the year shows very clear progress in key foundational skills such as letter formation and spelling.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are astutely aware of the school's successes and where action is necessary for further improvement. For example, they have taken effective action to address the teaching of phonics and reading. The best interests of pupils remain at the centre of the decisions that leaders at all levels make. However, this is not to the detriment of staff wellbeing and workload. Staff consistently mention 'strong communication' and leaders who are 'extremely supportive'. They are unanimously positive about the school and its leadership. Professional development for staff is a key priority for leaders. They have harnessed the staff training programme to drive forward their school improvement priorities since the last inspection.

Those responsible for governance diligently fulfil their statutory duties. Governors and senior leaders at trust level have a deep and insightful understanding of the school. They use this awareness to offer appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. Gaining a well-informed perspective from school leaders, those responsible for governance corroborate this information with their own visits to school and through external validation.

Leaders actively seek to engage parents and carers. This starts through well-planned transition into the early years or when families join the school in subsequent years. Leaders' work within the wider community is also commendable. Parents are typically complimentary about the school. They talk about the positive experiences their children have. They praise the school for making children the 'number one priority' and for its commitment to providing the best possible education for the children who attend.

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## Needs attention

### Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance, while typically positive, is declining over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is increasing. This means that some pupils miss important learning too often. This impacts negatively on their academic progress and social development. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the reasons for pupils' absence. They seek to work effectively with parents and carers to improve this. Where barriers exist, leaders work with families and other external agencies to secure improvements. Generally, this work is effective and has a positive impact. Leaders are seeing some indication in the reduction of the persistent absence of pupils. However, there are still some pupils whose attendance at school remains a concern.

The behaviour of pupils is highly positive. They are excellent ambassadors for their school. Classrooms are calm and productive. Pupils have commendable attitudes to learning. As a result, they benefit from the improvements made to the curriculum. Bullying and other discriminatory behaviours are rare. Where issues arise, staff address these quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the impact of their words, hence derogatory language is also rare. Where a very small number of pupils need support to manage their emotions, this is effective and well managed.

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

Pupils at Rawmarsh Ashwood live up to the school's ambition for them to become confident, enthusiastic and happy learners. They are fabulous representatives of their school. Pupils of all ages understand 'The Ashwood Way'. This sets out high expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning, their conduct and their aspirations. Pupils are proud to belong to the school. The comprehensive programme of pastoral support ensures relationships between staff and pupils remain highly positive. This contributes to a calm, supportive and purposeful environment for learning.

The school's high expectations are exemplified in classrooms. Pupils are attentive and enjoy their learning. Whether discussing a Roald Dahl poem or producing high-quality artwork, pupils benefit from numerous opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills across a broad and balanced curriculum. Well-trained staff seek to identify and remove any barriers to pupils' learning. This means that pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, including those who are disadvantaged or have other needs, typically make appropriate progress from their starting points. Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are generally improving over time. This means that pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of education.

Pupils access a wide range of opportunities that support them to thrive. As part of the 'Ashwood Pledges', pupils develop key skills for future life. These include becoming active citizens through their support for charities, learning cookery skills, as well as taking on key responsibilities in school. All pupils are included in this wider offer.

Pupils' behaviour is commendable. They are exceedingly well-mannered. Pupils feel safe and valued. Bullying is rare. Pupils have confidence that if this does happen, it is addressed quickly. Over time, pupils' attendance has declined steadily, most notably for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, there are some pupils who miss out on important learning. This limits the progress they can make academically and socially.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that recent improvements in phonics teaching, as well as approaches to teaching reading across school, strengthen published outcomes so that pupils achieve well and in line with other pupils nationally.
  - Leaders should ensure that their work with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, results in fewer pupils being persistently absent from school.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Wickersley Partnership Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen O' Brien, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Hemingway.

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 headteacher, other school staff, the chair of the local governing body, a director from the trust, the CEO of the trust and representatives of the 2 alternative provisions that the school currently uses. They also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The assistant headteacher was appointed in 2025.

Headteacher: Dawn Roper

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**Lead inspector:**

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Helen Hussey, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Ashworth, 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 14 July 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

**175**

Below 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: 272

**School capacity**

**210**

Below 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)**

**28.74%**

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: 26.3%

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

**4.57%**

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: 3.5%

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**16.57%**

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**

**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).

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 | 48%         | 61%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 52%         | 62%              | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 55%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 38%         | 60%              | Below                          |

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 | 61%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 62%         | 75%              | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 66%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 55%         | 73%              | Below                          |

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 | 58%         | 72%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 67%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 59%         | 72%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 52%         | 71%              | Below                          |

### 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 | 68%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 71%         | 74%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 69%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 66%         | 73%              | Close to average               |

### 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 | 35%         | 46%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 50%         | 47%              | Close to average               |

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | 36%         | 46%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | 25%         | 44%              | Below                          |

### 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 | 52%         | 62%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 75%         | 63%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 62%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 42%         | 60%              | Below                          |

### 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 | 45%         | 59%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 63%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 58%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 33%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 58%         | 60%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 75%         | 61%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 55%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 50%         | 59%              | Close to average               |

## 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 35%         | 68%                              | -32 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 50%         | 69%                              | -19 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 36%         | 67%                              | -31 pp                  |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 25%         | 66%                              | -41 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 | 52%         | 80%                              | -28 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 75%         | 81%                              | -6 pp                   |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 80%                              | -34 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 42%         | 78%                              | -37 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 | 45%         | 78%                              | -33 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 63%         | 78%                              | -16 pp                  |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 78%                              | -32 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 33%         | 77%                              | -44 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 | 58%         | 80%                              | -22 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 75%         | 81%                              | -6 pp                   |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 55%         | 79%                              | -25 pp                  |

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 50%         | 79%                              | -29 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) | 5.5%        | 5.2%             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 5.3%        | 5.5%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 4.3%        | 5.9%             | Below                          |

### 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) | 16.0%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 6.7%        | 16.2%            | Below                          |

## 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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