

Capel-le-Ferne Primary School

Address: Capel Street, Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone, Kent, CT18 7HB

Unique reference number (URN): 118515

Inspection report: 9 June 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.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure the curriculum is generally taught well. Leaders' decisions about curriculum development are appropriate and evidence-informed. They ensure it is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Leaders support staff to develop the knowledge and skills they need to teach the planned curriculum with increasing consistency. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and make effective decisions about what to teach and when. They ensure pupils have the resources or adaptations they need to support their learning. Teachers use assessment to inform planning and teaching. However, sometimes, checks on pupils' learning are not as thorough or timely as they could be. This means that pupils are sometimes moved on to new learning before they know and understand the key information.

Leaders prioritise reading within the curriculum. The phonics programme is fully embedded and delivered well. Pupils who struggle with reading access regular additional practice. Most pupils learn the foundations of writing, spelling, mathematics and reading securely. Securing these skills is prioritised across the school. However, gaps in knowledge for some older pupils have not always been closed as quickly as possible.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that children access high-quality provision in Reception through a carefully mapped and sequenced curriculum. A clear focus on communication and language runs through the curriculum. Staff interactions support children to develop vocabulary and spoken language.

The learning environment has been thoughtfully resourced to meet children's needs and is an engaging and inviting learning space. Pupils are confident and happy in their environment. Adults provide appropriate interactions to support learning. Children are supported to access all areas of the curriculum. The needs and interests of all children are considered, and activities are planned carefully to support learning. There are clear rules and routines, which are followed consistently. Children take turns and know what to do when they have finished an activity. They demonstrate high levels of respect for their environment, routinely clearing up after themselves. Children have positive attitudes to learning.

Reading is prioritised, and children begin learning phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Staff deliver the school's chosen approach effectively. Most children develop secure early reading skills, which supports their early writing. The school's checks on learning are used effectively to identify gaps. Children make secure progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders use effective systems to quickly identify and successfully reduce many of the barriers that pupils face. They make sure that teachers receive training so that they can identify the differing needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide support for teachers to help them to understand how

and when to make suitable adaptations for pupils. This leads to most pupils successfully making progress through the planned curriculum. Leaders have prioritised pupils being able to learn in the classroom alongside their peers. Activities are adapted appropriately and support pupils with SEND in developing the key skills and knowledge they need. Individual targets are carefully identified and integrated into daily learning, enabling pupils to revisit and embed key foundational knowledge securely.

Leaders carefully consider the best ways to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including through the effective use of additional funding. They work closely with parents, carers and external agencies. Leaders regularly check how well disadvantaged pupils achieve. They ensure that pupils learn well and are included in all activities. They use this information to tailor support for pupils and ensure it continues to have a positive impact.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils and staff. They have created an inclusive culture where pupils feel safe and happy. Leaders make decisions based on their thorough knowledge of pupils, as well as their wider understanding of the school and its community. Leaders recognise the school's strengths and the priorities for further development. This includes continued work on improving attendance and pupils' achievement.

Leaders are role models of professionalism and have high expectations of what can be achieved by everyone in the school. Professional development for staff is well structured and supported through collaboration within and beyond the school. Staff share leaders' commitment to professional learning and appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their teaching. Staff are highly positive about leaders. They feel valued and involved in school improvement. Leaders support staff to manage their workload and wellbeing effectively.

Those responsible for governance know the school well and take pride in the school's work. Governors bring a range of experience and expertise that supports their work. They are knowledgeable and passionate about their roles. They use information from visits and speaking to staff, parents and pupils to assure themselves that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. This enables them to provide a high level of support and challenge.

Leaders and governors are committed to acting in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support is targeted appropriately, and leaders work closely with families to address barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

There is a well-considered and coherent personal development programme for pupils across the school. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well structured and appropriate. It supports pupils to understand how to stay safe, including online, and how to manage risks to their wellbeing. Pupils develop a secure understanding of relationships. Teaching ensures that pupils are equipped to make informed and responsible choices.

Pupils' personal and social development is a strength of the school's work, with an established buddy system and peer support network that build a clear sense of community and belonging. Pupils develop their understanding of respect, tolerance and the rule of law. Older pupils are beginning to develop their understanding of more complex themes and issues, such as exploitation and the effects of substance misuse. Themes such as racism and discrimination are understood by pupils, who say that they do not happen in their school.

There are opportunities for pupils to contribute to the development of the school through the work of the school council. Opportunities to take responsibility and become play leaders, reader leaders and anti-bullying leaders contribute positively to pupils' confidence. Pastoral support in the school is effective. Adults have strong relationships with pupils, showing high levels of care, respect and support. Pupils make use of support systems in school if they identify that they need a break, for example, independently accessing support from the nurture room for some quiet time.

Pupils' interests and talents are broadened through the range of clubs and wider opportunities available. These include links with local secondary schools, community groups, businesses and further education settings. Leaders track participation and ensure these opportunities are available for all pupils. Annual finance workshops, first-aid training, inter-school sports tournaments, a residential trip and the choir's trips to London benefit pupils and help to prepare them for life beyond primary school.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Most pupils are now making progress from starting points across the curriculum and year groups. Published outcomes over time indicate that disadvantaged pupils achieve well compared to disadvantaged pupils nationally, particularly in reading. However, over time, achievement in national tests at the end of key stage 2 has been below average overall.

Pupils currently at the school use phonics securely. Most pupils read accurately and fluently. Leaders have successfully focused on strengthening the school's phonics programme so that pupils learn phonics effectively. They typically apply this knowledge confidently to make positive progress through the phonics programme. Pupils develop confidence and an enjoyment of learning at the school. They are well prepared for their next steps at the end of Reception and key stage 1, and key foundations are firmly embedded. This demonstrates the positive impact leaders' decisions are having on teaching and pupils' achievement.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Leaders have established clear systems and priorities to improve attendance, and there are signs of improvement as a result of their work. Attendance at the school is now broadly in line with national averages. Leaders work closely with families to identify and address barriers, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, persistent absence for some groups of pupils is still too high.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They respond positively to the high expectations of behaviour that all staff have for them. Children in the early years learn how to sustain concentration. Older pupils work hard in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about what they are learning. The school is a calm and purposeful environment. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other and adults. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils trust that staff will help them and deal with the rare incidents of bullying and unkindness. Highly positive behaviour during breaktimes is a celebration of the positive relationships that exist across the school. Pupils say that they are kind to one another and that if any rules are broken they are well supported not to make the same mistake again.

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

Pupils arrive at school each day happy to be part of their inclusive and supportive school community. More of them are attending regularly than in previous years. However, some pupils still do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they sometimes miss out on important learning.

Pupils know that staff want them to achieve well. Starting in Reception, pupils now build knowledge and skills successfully over time as they progress through the school. However, these improvements have not yet had an impact in published outcomes at the end of key stage 2.

Staff know pupils and families well and greet them warmly on arrival. Pupils value and demonstrate respect in classrooms, around the school and in the playground. Pupils confidently discuss their enjoyment of learning and the opportunities the school provides for them.

Behaviour across the school is highly positive. Pupils focus on their work and collaborate effectively. They look out for each other and readily support peers who may need help. For example, Year 5 pupils buddy up with Reception children to help them settle in to school life, and 'reader leaders' support younger pupils to improve their reading. Highly effective professional relationships between staff and pupils help them to build trust. Incidents of bullying are rare. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of enrichment opportunities available. A carefully considered range of educational visits enhances their learning of curriculum subjects. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the range of activities available at playtime. Pupils benefit from effective pastoral care. They build independence and confidence through the rich range of opportunities and thoughtful support they receive.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure assessment is used more consistently and effectively to address misconceptions promptly, so that pupils build understanding securely and leave school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- Leaders should continue to embed their systems for promoting regular attendance so that pupils' attendance rates continue to rise and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent reduces.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Sarah Leonard and Beverley Taylor.

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 and other senior and curriculum leaders. They also spoke with members of the governing body, including one of the co-chairs of the board of governors. They also met with a representative from the local authority.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their role in September 2022.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Anthony Richards

Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Catherine Hylands, Ofsted Inspector

Louise Lythgoe, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

179

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)

21.23%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

1.12%

Below 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

22.91%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	47%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	81%	71%	Above

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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	45%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	85%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	86%	60%	Above

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	70%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	86%	58%	Above

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	60%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	59%	Below

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	45%	68%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	69%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	66%	-23 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	85%	80%	5 pp
2024/25 (final)	89%	81%	8 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	86%	78%	7 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	70%	78%	-8 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	86%	77%	8 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	79%	-36 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	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)	19.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	18.4%	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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