

The Skinners' School

Address: St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9PG

Unique reference number (URN): 140595

Inspection report: 27 January 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Over time, outcomes for all pupils in national examinations have been consistently above national averages, including at post-16. Disadvantaged pupils do very well compared to similar pupils nationally. This reflects leaders' high aspirations for all pupils.

At key stage 3, pupils produce work of high quality. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, drawing on knowledge they have learned previously to help them understand increasingly complex concepts. Pupils have an impressive understanding of technical vocabulary, which they use fluently and with confidence to demonstrate their understanding. As pupils progress through the school, they can explain their thinking in increasingly greater depth.

Pupils are very well equipped for their next stage in education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend very well. They feel a tremendous sense of pride in their school. Overall, attendance has been consistently above national averages, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absence remains low and has decreased further over time.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' attendance. They know their pupils well. They recognise the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending as frequently as they could. Trends in absence are closely checked. This information is used intelligently to put in place the most appropriate pastoral support for pupils who need it.

There is a culture of kindness and mutual respect in the school. Pupils know the high expectations leaders have of them. Pupils are very well mannered. They engage confidently with visitors in a mature way. Classrooms are calm environments where pupils are highly engaged. If they are talking to their peers, this is because they are passionate about what they are learning. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that if there were any, it would be addressed swiftly. The clear routines set by leaders are very well understood by staff, who apply them consistently.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that reflects their remarkably high ambitions for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They review the curriculum continually to ensure it remains challenging for all pupils. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to enable pupils to gain the detailed knowledge and skills they need to prepare them well for their next steps in education or training.

The school's approach to teaching is highly effective. Teachers demonstrate expert subject knowledge. They are rigorous in their approach to the teaching of technical vocabulary, increasing the challenge as pupils move through the school. Teachers skilfully use questioning to check what pupils know. They help pupils to understand and connect more complex ideas. Leaders ensure that teachers have detailed information about pupils' individual needs and barriers. Activities are adapted appropriately so that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are well supported to achieve the aims of the curriculum. Targeted support is provided for handwriting and comprehension, when needed.

Leaders, with support from the trust, have developed an effective professional learning programme that reflects their high expectations for teaching. This enables staff to continue to develop their expertise.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear vision for the school rooted in high ambition for all pupils. Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's context and are ambitious to improve it further. This includes strengthening the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders, with support from the trust, have developed an effective professional learning programme that ensures staff have the expertise needed to continue to raise standards. There is a clear focus on pupils who experience barriers to their learning, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The supportive nature of the school means that alternative provision is rarely used. When it is, it is carefully reviewed to ensure it is right for individual pupils.

Governors share leaders' high ambitions for pupils' academic and personal development. They are knowledgeable about the school's work. Governors support leaders to create a culture and ethos built on high expectations, but also one of nurturing, pastoral care. Those responsible for governance know their statutory responsibilities well and have effective systems in place to both challenge and support leaders. Through planned visits to the school, they can identify and evaluate specific actions leaders have taken to improve pupils' experiences.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the supportive environment created by leaders. Staff benefit from the professional development opportunities in the school. They value leaders' work to ensure their workload is manageable. Early career teachers and trainees benefit from highly effective training.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

There is a comprehensive and thoughtfully sequenced personal development and wellbeing programme. This is an entitlement for every pupil. Leaders have ensured this programme is responsive to the needs and interests of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, so all pupils can flourish both academically and personally.

Pupils are reflective about their beliefs and values. They have opportunities to debate moral and philosophical issues and show respect to views that differ from their own. Pupils have a secure understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy and the importance of

abiding by the law. This means they are well prepared for life beyond the school. Pupils demonstrate well-developed social skills. They value the diversity in their community.

Pupils gain secure knowledge about healthy relationships, consent and personal safety. Teaching about online and offline risks is current and responsive, enabling pupils to understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils are confident in raising concerns and know how to seek help. Pupils are taught about physical and mental health. They understand different strategies that can be used to help manage emotions, deal with challenges and sustain positive wellbeing. Healthy lifestyles are reinforced through curriculum learning, enrichment opportunities and daily school routines. Pupils who require emotional support benefit from the school's effective pastoral care.

The school's extensive extra-curricular offer provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests across sport, the arts, culture, volunteering and leadership. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils participate fully in these. Leaders are responsive to the needs of pupils and provide opportunities that match their interests.

Careers guidance is tailored to pupils' aspirations. The school engages well with employers. Former pupils return to the school to share their experiences. This helps current pupils to have an informed understanding of how to achieve their ambitions.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious and well-designed post-16 curriculum. This precisely aligns to students' aspirations for further education or training. Curriculum pathways are coherent and carefully structured so that students build deep subject knowledge, academic confidence and independence.

Teaching in the sixth form is precise. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and make highly effective choices about what to teach, and when and how to teach it. Checks on learning are used to identify misconceptions and gaps in understanding. Teaching is adapted swiftly so that students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can achieve highly. In national examinations, students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve consistently above national averages. Students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of their learning and apply their knowledge confidently.

Personal development is woven seamlessly into the post-16 experience through the wider opportunities provided by the school. Students develop impressive leadership skills by acting as mentors to Year 7 pupils. Students lead a range of sports and arts clubs, and house captains undertake duties at breaktimes. Students work closely with the local girls' grammar school to secure a legacy of positive attitudes to women and girls.

The extensive careers programme means that students are well informed about their next steps.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well. The school has systems in place to identify pupils' needs, which include close working with the many feeder primary schools. Leaders assess pupils when they join the school and put effective strategies in place to reduce any barriers to their learning. This includes appropriate use of external agencies and targeted in-school interventions in handwriting and reading fluency.

Leaders use the professional learning programme to develop the expertise of staff to help them reduce pupils' barriers to learning in the classroom. Leaders regularly review the impact of the support teachers provide. The support for pupils with SEND is effective, and teachers make appropriate adaptations to enable pupils to access the curriculum. However, leaders are less precise about how they identify barriers and monitor the individual support they provide for some disadvantaged pupils.

The use of the pupil premium funding is appropriate. Leaders make thoughtful choices about how this is used to enable disadvantaged pupils to flourish in the wider opportunities in the school.

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

Pupils are incredibly proud of what it means to be part of the Skinners' School community. They feel this is a place where everyone belongs. Pupils are ambitious and driven to be successful. They are polite and respectful, greeting adults and visitors warmly. Students in the sixth form take their roles as mentors to new pupils seriously.

Leaders have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve here. Pupils are committed learners who enjoy the challenge of learning complex ideas and concepts. They are supported by knowledgeable staff who encourage them to strive to become the best they can be. Pupils achieve very well in national examinations. Younger pupils produce work of a high quality and develop an impressive use of complex vocabulary.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' needs and identify barriers to their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. All pupils, including students at post-16, are very well prepared for their next steps.

There is something for everyone at Skinners' School. Pupils are encouraged to explore their interests in the arts, music, mathematics, sciences, languages and sports. Pupils benefit from a rich personal development programme that enables them to make a positive contribution through the many leadership roles available. Students in the sixth form lead a peer education project that delivers sessions on positive mental health and building resilience for younger pupils.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments where pupils can focus on their tasks without disruption. Pupils feel safe. They are confident to report any concerns they have to staff. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust that adults will address it swiftly if it were to happen. The supportive culture, built on high expectations, means that pupils want to come to school and they attend very well.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their approach to identifying specific barriers for some disadvantaged pupils and closely monitor the impact of the individual support strategies they put in place.
 - Leaders should continue their work to develop autonomous, self-regulating individuals who demonstrate the positive values the school wants to instil in all its pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Skinners' Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Anderson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Johnny Aisher.

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, senior leaders, other leaders and staff at the school. Inspectors also met with trust leaders, including the CEO, trustees and members of the local governing board. Inspectors spoke with pupils at different times across the school day.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision. That provider is unregistered.

Headteacher: Edward Wesson

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Keith Pailthorpe, Ofsted Inspector

Owen McColgan, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Middleton, Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's 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 27 January 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,141

Close to 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: 1,067

School capacity

945

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

5.81%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

0.09%

Well 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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.57%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

VI - Visual Impairment, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	93.4%	45.2%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	96.9%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	70.7	45.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	74.1	45.9	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	72.7	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.99	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.71	-0.03	Above

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	81.3%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	25.8%	S
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	60.8	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	34.6	S
2022/23 (final)	66.6	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	-0.57	S
2022/23 (final)	0.66	-0.57	Above

'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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	81.3%	52.8%	28.4 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	S	53.1%	S
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	52.4%	47.6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	60.8	50.3	10.5
2023/24 (final)	S	50.0	S
2022/23 (final)	66.6	50.3	16.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	S	0.16	S
2022/23 (final)	0.66	0.17	0.50

'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.

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	98%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	99%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	42.67	34.99	Above
2023/24 (final)	45.99	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	43.20	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above

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 (2 term)	3.5%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.4%	9.0%	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 (2 term)	5.3%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	26.5%	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.

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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