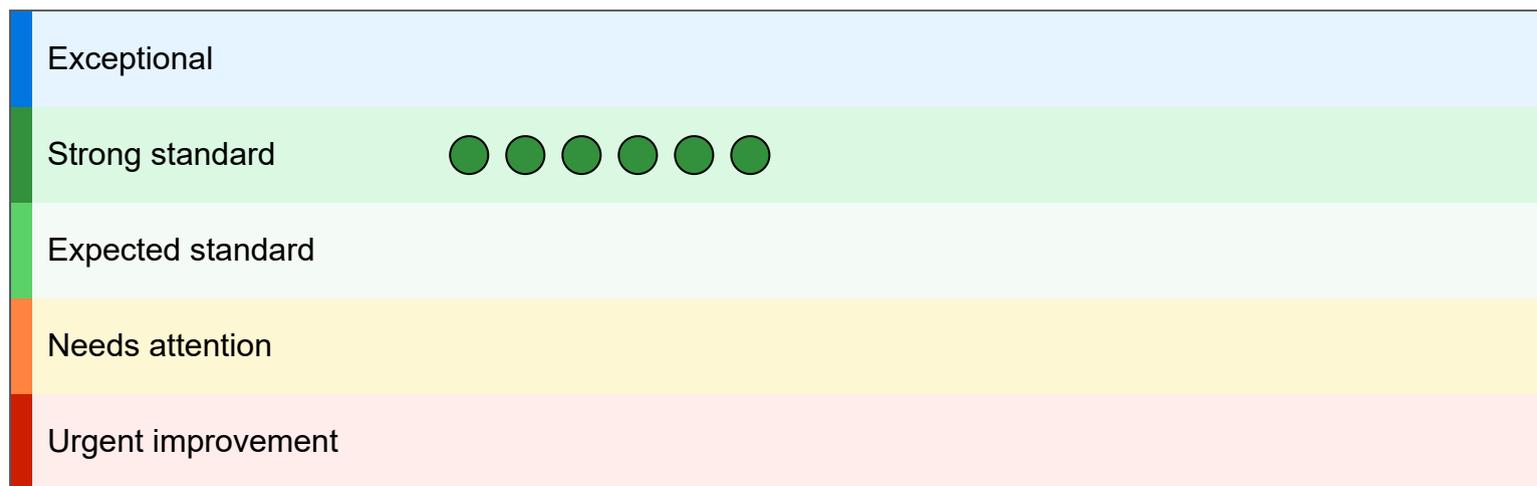


Hawkswood (Therapeutic)

Address: Antlers Hill, E4 7RT

Unique reference number (URN): 137677

Inspection report: 25 November 2025



✔ **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 ●

Through a well-designed and bespoke provision of therapeutic and academic support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make great strides in overcoming barriers to their learning.

Pupils often join the school feeling anxious about education and lack self-confidence. Many have had long periods out of education. Leaders have clear processes in place to identify the gaps in pupils' learning and provide the support that each pupil needs to close these gaps quickly. As their motivation and self-esteem grow, pupils' attendance and attentiveness increase substantially, helping them to learn well and thrive.

Pupils typically make rapid progress through the curriculum from their different starting points. Pupils develop knowledge and skills across a range of subjects and gain qualifications to enable them to progress successfully and sustain their next stage of education, training or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders maintain close oversight of pupils' attendance and take an individualised approach. They understand what works for each pupil and how to reduce the barriers to their attendance. Close communication between staff, families and pupils, coupled with staff's thorough understanding of each pupil's challenging circumstances, means that swift and effective steps are taken if there are any setbacks. Pupils' attendance improves substantially during their time here.

Leaders have developed a school that presents a calm and caring environment that nurtures pupils' sense of belonging. Pupils want to attend. They value how the school teaches them to enjoy learning. Pupils are attentive and work purposefully in lessons. They are respectful and considerate towards each other and adults around the school.

Pupils are reassured by and appreciate staff's high expectations for behaviour. Clear systems are in place to address any issues, although these are rarely needed. Staff know each pupil very well and are alert to changes in behaviour. They act quickly to resolve any concerns. They know, understand and take the right approaches to support individual pupils if they struggle to manage their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have sustained and built on the strengths of the ambitious curriculum seen at the previous inspection. They astutely review and adjust each pupil's timetable, achieving a careful balance between therapeutic interventions, academic learning and personal and social development, tailored to individual pupil's needs. Staff make close and skilful reference to pupils' longer-term targets, for example those in a pupil's education, health and

care plan. They ensure that pupils work towards and achieve the ambitious targets set for them at this school.

Teachers' assessments identify gaps in pupils' learning precisely. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from helpful individualised support so that they catch up and deepen their learning. Leaders prioritise securing pupils' essential knowledge. Pupils who are behind in reading receive intensive support from suitably experienced staff, using well-considered resources and routines, so that they catch up swiftly and keep up.

Teachers use their subject specialisms to provide a well-thought-through and motivating curriculum, providing continuity with pupils' previous studies and supporting their next steps in education. Teachers give clear explanations to resolve any misconceptions. They support pupils with revision techniques and tips to help remember key facts and technical vocabulary and to retain and apply information to more complex ideas.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Being inclusive is woven through every aspect of life in this school. Leaders ensure that they, and all staff, know and understand the barriers to learning and engagement faced by all pupils. Vulnerable pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, receive highly effective and carefully designed support to enable them to thrive here.

Before pupils start at the school, leaders have clear strategies in place to meet pupils' needs and to enable them to benefit from the opportunities and experiences the school offers. Leaders work closely with pupils, their families and outside organisations to prioritise pupils' initial and ongoing targets. Leaders' high expectations and well-established routines ensure that there is regular and frequent communication across the school, including between therapeutic and academic teams. Staff rigorously review pupils' progress in meeting their targets to ensure that the right steps are taken to help pupils engage positively with life in school and to achieve well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have sustained and extended the strengths of the school seen at the previous inspection. They are proactive in their ongoing review of policy and practice, responding productively to new and ongoing challenges.

Leaders ensure that staff have enduring expertise in their inclusive practice in response to changing profiles of pupils attending the school. For example, leaders and staff receive useful training that helps them to meet the needs of pupils with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Leaders are also highly focused on maintaining and building capacity to ensure that there is a consistent level of strategic and operational oversight of all aspects of the school's work.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of training and development opportunities. Leaders recognise and use staff's aspirations and talents, identifying the opportunities and

experiences their work can offer to enable them to be fulfilled. Staff value their professional learning facilitated by the school, including embarking on Master's programmes, apprenticeships and gaining mentoring opportunities.

The board of governors, comprising the joint management committee, is knowledgeable about the work of the school and fully understands its strengths and priorities. Governors ensure that their training is up to date and that they are well placed to provide leaders with the optimal levels of challenge and support.

Leaders are highly considerate of looking after staff wellbeing. They prioritise helping staff to stay well and providing a range of opportunities for staff to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Staff are especially appreciative of leaders' consideration of their workload when making policy changes and the time given for specific tasks.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders place the utmost priority on all pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are woven carefully into all aspects of the curriculum and school life. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit greatly from these enriching opportunities. Staff sensitively and skilfully remove any barriers to pupils accessing personal development. Pupils are equipped with the knowledge and personal skills they need to embark successfully on their chosen next stage of education, training or employment.

The school provides a comprehensive and well-embedded careers programme. Leaders seize every opportunity to inspire and develop pupils' interests. Staff link an extensive range of enrichment activities to relevant career aspirations. Pupils benefit from a breadth of employment and training opportunities, including careers fairs and regular visits to and from a diverse range of employers and training providers. Leaders have a well-established and highly considered approach to providing pupils with work experience. Pupils gain valuable insight into the world of work through carefully chosen opportunities that develop their skills while meeting their social, emotional and mental health needs.

Leaders are vigilant in their oversight of the personal development programme across the school to make sure that no pupil misses out. All pupils are taught key themes in personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education. Staff provide each pupil with information, guidance and support. This takes into account pupils' specific circumstances and challenges that are especially relevant to them. The school's emotional literacy programme guides pupils to develop the personal strategies they need to identify, articulate and manage their emotions. This helps them to recognise and overcome any challenges they face in day-to-day life, including in working environments and social settings.

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

When pupils arrive at school, they are welcomed with warm greetings and smiles. They settle in quickly, gaining a sense of belonging because of the positive relationships with staff and the friendships they make with each other.

Leaders know each pupil very well and understand thoroughly the barriers to learning they face. Staff are quick to spot if any pupil is not quite themselves and act swiftly to provide the help needed to resolve any concerns. Serious behaviour incidents, such as bullying, are very rare. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. If ever they feel worried, there is always an adult they can turn to for help.

Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individualised support. Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils benefit from the calm and quiet environment in lessons and around the school. This helps them to start to enjoy learning and concentrate well on the tasks at hand. Staff skilfully identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide them with the individual support they need to catch up. Pupils typically attend well and make rapid progress from their different starting points, often after previously having long periods out of education.

Staff provide pupils with high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of experiences and educational trips that inspire their interests and boost their career ambitions. They grow in confidence and self-esteem as they take on responsibilities through the school council and enterprise projects. They are delighted to help care for the school's therapy dog.

Leaders enable pupils to recognise and understand the challenges they face in everyday life and equip them with the strategies they need to overcome them. The school's finely balanced combination of academic and therapeutic provision, with notably effective personal development, prepares pupils very well to take up and sustain their next steps in education, training or employment.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

About this inspection

The school is part of a federation called Hawkswood Group.

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 met with school leaders including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the lead therapist, the special educational needs coordinator and two members of the joint management committee. Inspectors also spoke with members of staff and pupils in meetings and around the school.

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 is a pupil referral unit that caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Typically, pupils attend the school for a 20-week placement before returning to mainstream school.

The reported number on roll does not accurately reflect the number of pupils who attend this school. At the time of the inspection, 13 pupils were attending the school. They remained on the roll of their mainstream school.

The school has capacity to accommodate up to 27 pupils.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nathalie Fitzgerald

Lead inspector:

Amanda Fraser, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Polly Haste, 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.

School and pupil context

Total pupils

0

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.

School capacity

32

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

0.0%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Close to 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.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school
2024/25 (1 term)	S
2023/24	S
2022/23	S

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (1 term)	S
2023/24	S
2022/23	S

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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