

# Haven Nook

**Address:** 73-75, Castle Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2QD

**Unique reference number (URN):** 149146

## Inspection report: 16 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.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils leave school with a suitable set of qualifications that prepares them well for their next stages. When entered for external examinations, pupils are successful and achieve well from their starting points. In addition, pupils gain self-confidence and resilience. Many learn to manage their social and emotional health more positively. Consequently, pupils are typically well prepared for the future. They generally sustain education, employment and training pathways into post-16 provision.

Pupils who attend well learn effectively, in line with curriculum aims. They produce high-quality work that shows how they can apply learning in new ways. They become increasingly secure in using prior knowledge to help them understand new concepts. Teaching typically helps pupils talk about their ideas with improving articulation. However, some inconsistencies remain in the depth and detail of pupils' spoken and written work across the wider curriculum. In some subjects, staff do not maximise opportunities for pupils to practise these skills.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a suitable and ambitious curriculum for pupils. Each pupil follows a personalised curriculum that reflects their starting points and ambitions. The curriculum builds in a sequenced and logical way. Leaders have ensured that each subject and option provides a pathway to a meaningful qualification.

The curriculum is typically taught well. Teachers are subject experts. They use clear, explicit language to explain challenging concepts in simple terms. They teach important technical vocabulary so pupils understand subject-specific terminology. Teaching strategies generally engage pupils well. Regular questions help pupils draw upon their prior learning and think about ideas in new ways. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding of new concepts before moving on. Pupils receive regular feedback about the quality of their work. They use this feedback to think more deeply and improve their learning.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive targeted support to develop fluency. In English and mathematics, pupils practise essential literacy and numeracy skills. However, across other curriculum subjects, teaching does not consistently help pupils practise these. Expectations for speaking or writing in full sentences are not consistent. This means that pupils miss important opportunities to develop key skills.

### Inclusion

Expected standard 

Most pupils join the school after several years of disrupted education. This leads to gaps in their learning as well as in their social and emotional development. Staff quickly get to know pupils and their families well. They use detailed checks to identify barriers to learning and personal development accurately. Leaders help staff understand the potential effect of childhood trauma on learning and self-esteem. Staff use this expertise to implement

supportive strategies that help pupils feel positive about themselves and develop aspirations for a bright, successful future.

Pupils receive regular expert therapeutic support that helps them develop confidence and self-belief. Pupils who require additional professional expertise, such as speech and language support, receive effective help to meet the aims in their education, health and care plans. The school is improving how it works in partnership with the local authority to ensure that children in care receive consistently effective support.

All pupils have detailed, personalised academic targets. Staff typically adapt their teaching to help pupils meet these. Staff carefully monitor pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs to ensure that the strategies in place are effective. Leaders are improving how staff integrate therapeutic approaches into lessons to strengthen pupils' engagement learning.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders use their expertise to provide an interesting and coherent personal development programme that reflects pupils' needs. Pupils learn about important topics, such as the pressures of social media and consensual relationships. This helps them become knowledgeable about keeping safe online and in the community. When needed, staff provide targeted education to help pupils understand risks linked to the specific vulnerabilities they face due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that pupils receive the help they need to avoid risks.

Pupils 'check in' with trusted staff members each day. These sessions help them reflect on their academic and personal accomplishments, fostering a sense of pride. In lessons, pupils debate philosophical questions, such as whether it is better to be polite or honest, helping them consider the value of both. Pupils speak positively about the choices the school gives them and how they feel listened to. All pupils benefit from weekly off-site enrichment to nurture their interests. They develop important social skills by meeting new people.

Pupils learn fundamental British values purposefully, including democracy and the rule of law. Visits to the local courts help them understand the role of the justice system in society. Visits from public services give pupils first-hand insight into the important roles the police and fire brigade play in the community.

The school supports pupils for adulthood effectively. Pupils have many opportunities to go off site to practise travelling independently and using money. All pupils take part in cooking activities to develop their understanding of healthy eating. Careers education is highly bespoke and reflects pupils' needs and ambitions. Leaders plan to increase work-experience opportunities to raise pupils' employment aspirations. They are linking careers education to the curriculum so pupils can understand how their learning connects to future career prospects.

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## Needs attention

### Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Many pupils have struggled to attend school regularly in the past, due to the specific challenges arising from their special educational needs and/or disabilities. In some cases, the school provides effective support to improve attendance by working closely with families. However, in others, significant changes in staffing and leadership have limited the effectiveness of home–school attendance support. Some pupils have very low attendance. While improvements are evident, they are not swift enough. This means some pupils are at risk of not making the progress they are capable of.

Changes in leadership have brought about increased expectations for behaviour. Initially, some pupils found this challenging. This led to a reduction in attendance and an increase in suspensions. However, pupils are now meeting expectations more successfully. The school is a calm and orderly environment, and suspensions have reduced significantly. Staff help pupils anticipate changes to their day. Routines are consistent and predictable, enabling pupils to follow the school rules and keep themselves safe. Staff support pupils to understand their emotions and settle themselves if they feel worried. As a result, most pupils are calm and able to learn well. Bullying and discrimination are rare because staff help pupils overcome their differences effectively.

### Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

The school has undergone a prolonged period of significant staffing and leadership change. During this time, the proprietor did not establish systems to ensure compliance with the independent school standards (the standards). An emergency inspection in November 2025 found the school did not meet the standards in part 6, part 7 and part 8. Although new leaders have introduced more robust oversight, their systems are very new. This inspection identified potential unmet standards in part 3 and part 5 related to health and safety. Leaders acted swiftly to resolve these issues during the inspection, but the proprietor has not ensured that leaders can meet the standards securely and consistently without external guidance. As a result, part 8 of the standards remains unmet.

More recently, the proprietor has strengthened oversight. A newly formed advisory board provides effective support and impartial challenge, drawing on members' expertise. Leaders' work to improve the complaints process and share information with parents means that the school now meets previously unmet standards in parts 6 and 7.

New leaders are knowledgeable about school improvement and deeply committed to improving educational outcomes for all pupils. They have identified clear priorities using their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have made well-judged decisions to improve pupils' learning experiences and raise standards. These include providing carefully planned training to help staff make adaptations to meet pupils' needs. Pupils' best interests are at the centre of leaders' work, although it is too early to see its impact on pupils with historically low attendance.

Staff feel well supported, and most are proud to work at the school. Parents' and professionals' views are mixed. Leaders recognise concerns and are committed to

rebuilding trust and strengthening confidence among all stakeholders.

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

Pupils enjoy their time at this nurturing and distinctive school because staff create an environment, where pupils rebuild trust and regain a sense of belonging. Many pupils have spent long periods out of education, yet they settle quickly here as staff understand their communication and emotional needs.

Pupils study an engaging, relevant curriculum that prepares them for ambitious next steps. Staff organise learning carefully so pupils work towards suitable qualifications. The curriculum is highly personalised to reflect each pupil's starting point. Staff are typically expert at adapting teaching approaches to help pupils learn well.

Positive relationships sit at the heart of the school's success. Pupils can generally regulate their emotions and communicate effectively, as staff use sensitive and skilful therapeutic approaches. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and strive to meet high expectations. Bullying occurs rarely. If it does, staff address it swiftly, ensuring a disruption-free environment.

Some pupils do not attend well enough. Recent staffing changes mean a few pupils do not receive the help they need to attend regularly. Pupils behave very well in school. They speak kindly to staff and each other. They enjoy shared interests, such as playing chess or walking the school dogs.

The broad, well-organised curriculum is supplemented with outdoor learning and extensive enrichment. Pupils work towards their personal goals, such as visiting new places. Enterprise opportunities, including running craft fairs and organising charity events, build pupils' confidence and develop their financial literacy in preparation for adulthood.

A sense of community is evident throughout the school. Pupils form firm friendships, support one another and celebrate achievements. Regular opportunities for pupils to 'check in' with trusted adults help pupils to feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

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## Next steps

- The proprietor should increase the rigour of their systems for oversight and quality assurance and ensure that these are implemented effectively so that all the independent school standards are securely met over time.
- Leaders should ensure they raise pupils' attendance more rapidly, particularly for those who are severely absent, by ensuring that their support effectively removes barriers to positive attendance to school.
- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently provide pupils with opportunities to practise speaking, reading and writing across the curriculum, so that pupils strengthen these aspects of their foundational knowledge.

- Leaders should continue to foster positive partnerships and effective communication with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure pupils receive coordinated support that helps them to succeed.
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## About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards (ISS). These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 head of school, school leaders and staff, members of the advisory board and the proprietor during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school provides education for up to 20 pupils aged 11 to 18 years. It caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and/or autism. All pupils have education, health and care plans.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The current head of school took up their temporary position in January 2026, and their role became substantive in April 2026. During this period, the school recruited 2 permanent deputy heads. A significant proportion of the teaching and support staff also took up their roles from September 2025. In addition, the school established an advisory board of external experts from January 2026.

At the time of the inspection, there were no students on roll in the sixth form. The school is not currently admitting pupils into its sixth form.

The name of the proprietor body is Haven Nook LTD. The chair of the proprietary body is Ruth Minhall.

The fees currently charged are £63,000 per year.

The email address of the school is [info@havennook.co.uk](mailto:info@havennook.co.uk).

The school's progress in meeting previously failed independent school standards:

During the inspection, inspectors checked whether the school now meets the ISS that it was judged to have failed at its previous emergency inspection on 12 November 2025.

The outcome of this part of the inspection is that the school continues to not meet the independent school standards.

## Part 8

An urgent inspection in November 2025 found that the independent school standards (the standards) in parts 6, 7 and 8 were not met. The proprietor had not established systems to monitor ongoing compliance, which left new leaders without the structures they needed to drive improvement and ensure the standards were met. They had to design and implement key processes from the ground up, slowing their ability to act at the pace they intended.

During this inspection, leaders completed on-site work to ensure that parts 3 and 5 of the standards were met in relation to implementing the written health and safety policy, complying with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and providing suitable accommodation for medical examination and treatment.

Leaders did not have access to an externally commissioned fire audit completed in February 2026. This meant the fire risk assessment was inaccurate. During the inspection, leaders obtained the audit and updated the fire risk assessment to address the moderate risks identified. It is now accurate and sets out how leaders will mitigate further risks.

Recording of health and safety maintenance checks was unclear and inconsistent. Leaders introduced clearer processes during the inspection to show when checks take place in line with the policy. Inspectors also found that the medical room was not suitable for caring for sick or injured pupils. It has now been furnished appropriately.

Processes to record essential information, including first-aid records and statutory census data, lacked rigour and resulted in inaccurate reporting. Leaders introduced clearer systems during the inspection to ensure compliant information-sharing and accountability. First-aid records are complete as of March 2026.

Despite addressing key issues identified during the inspection, these issues show that the proprietor has not ensured that leaders have the knowledge and skills to secure consistent compliance with the standards. Further training and support are needed to enable leaders to fulfil their roles consistently and expertly. Oversight systems remain at an early stage and are not yet robust enough to identify potential gaps without external scrutiny.

For this reason, the requirements for paragraphs 34(1)(a) and (b) remain unmet.

## Part 6

During the inspection, the proprietor and school leaders provided the inspection team with the information requested under section 109 of the 2008 Act. Leaders have suitable authority to access school information to support the inspection and meet part 6 of the standards. The school website now publishes the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Leaders plan to use termly website audits to check compliance. The school website meets the requirements of this part.

The requirements of this standard are now met.

## Part 7

The school has revised its complaints policy so that it aligns with the requirements of part 7 of the standards. The policy sets out how leaders manage complaints and how the school

records them and provides them for external scrutiny when required. The school provided complaints records to the inspection team. The proprietor has identified suitable leaders, including senior company staff, who can access complaint records when necessary. Leaders and the proprietor understand their responsibilities for managing complaints. The school has amended its annual management cycle to publish the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year on its website.

The requirements of this standard are now met.

Head of school: Wojciech Bialek

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## Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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|                                                                       |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1. Quality of education provided</b>                               | <b>Standards met</b> |
| All standards have been met.                                          |                      |
| <b>2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils</b> | <b>Standards met</b> |
| All standards have been met.                                          |                      |
| <b>3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils</b>                        | <b>Standards met</b> |
| All standards have been met.                                          |                      |
| <b>4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors</b>         | <b>Standards met</b> |
| All standards have been met.                                          |                      |
| <b>5. Premises of and accommodation at schools</b>                    | <b>Standards met</b> |
| All standards have been met.                                          |                      |

All standards have been met.

All standards have been met.

The following standards have not been met:

Paragraph 34(1)

The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–

- (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- (c) actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

**Lead inspector:**  
Michelle Payne, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**  
Elaine Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 16 June 2026

**Total pupils**

15

School capacity

20

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

15

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

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## 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.

### Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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