

Framework Areas	Overall Grade
School Context	
<u>Safeguarding</u>	Met
<u>Inclusion</u>	Exemplary
<u>Curriculum</u> and Teaching	Strong
<u>Achievement</u>	Strong
Behaviour and Attendance	Strong
<u>Personal Development & well-being</u>	Strong
<u>Leadership & Governance</u>	Strong

Causing concern	Needs attention	Expected Standard	Strong Standard	Exemplary
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	-----------------	-----------

School Context

The Rowans AP Academy is a dual-phase, trauma-informed provision operating under a single DfE number. It comprises two distinct yet interconnected settings, united by a cohesive ethos and a commitment to collaborative practice.

The Rowans was rated **Outstanding in all areas** in its November 2021 inspection (excluding the primary provision, which had not yet opened).

The Rowans Secondary Alternative Provision (AP) – for pupils in KS3 and KS4, many of whom have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion. The **provision** supports 65–70 pupils, with a strong emphasis on qualifications, life skills, and preparation for post-16 destinations. There is a strong focus on reintegration from short term placements.

The Rowans Primary SEMH Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision – a bespoke, therapeutic setting for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) whose primary need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). The **primary provision**, housed in a purpose-built unit, offers early intervention and holistic support for pupils with EHCPs. It combines therapeutic input with academic learning, ensuring all children make meaningful progress in a nurturing environment.

Both provisions benefit from a highly skilled and dedicated staff team, including teachers, TAs, intervention specialists, therapists, and administrative support. Staff consistently report high levels of pride, support, and professional development. In both the Primary and the Secondary provision, pupils, staff and families speak of a family atmosphere where a sense of belonging has been created for all.

Both settings work in close alignment under the strategic leadership of the principal, while day-to-day operations of the primary provision are led by an Assistant Headteacher. Together, we form one academy provision with a shared ethos, but with differentiated staffing, curriculum, and operational models tailored to the age and needs of our respective cohorts.

The **Primary SEMH provision**, established in 2023, serves up to 30 pupils and was created in response to urgent local demand. It functions as a precursor to *The Beeches Free School*, which has DfE approval and is currently in the pre-construction phase. Until The Beeches formally opens, the primary provision operates as part of The Rowans under the existing DfE registration and benefits from the shared expertise and resources of the wider academy.

The Rowans joined **The Howard Academy Trust** in February 2025, becoming the trust's first Special and Alternative Provision school. This provides new opportunities for collaboration, system leadership, and influence across both specialist and mainstream contexts.

The academy's vision - **"Inspiring Change for a Brighter Future"** - is lived daily through high expectations, nurturing relationships, values-led practice and an assets-based approach. The Rowans champions the principle that *"learning is without limits"*, providing a powerful, personalised education that is both academically ambitious and emotionally responsive. Daily school life is rooted in the core values of **kindness, commitment and resilience**. These values underpin every interaction, curriculum decision, and strategic priority. Staff and pupils alike are *'leading with kindness, growing with commitment and rising with resilience'* and embody the mantra: *"We see you, we hear you, we are with you."*

The Rowans is designed to re-engage children and young people who have experienced significant barriers to learning, including disrupted educational journeys, trauma, and complex SEMH needs. Many pupils arrive having been out of education for extended periods or having previously disengaged from mainstream settings.

The provision offers:

- A **highly personalised and adapted curriculum**, both academic and therapeutic
- Robust **pastoral and behavioural support and guidance**
- Strong focus on **relationship-based practice and co-regulation**
- Targeted **intervention pathways** to support reintegration, qualifications, and longer-term outcomes
- Support for next steps, through an outstanding personal development offer

Safeguarding

Current Judgement: Met

Safeguarding is a high priority at The Rowans. There is a strong culture of vigilance, professional curiosity, and care, underpinned by robust systems and a highly trained staff team. Safeguarding is understood to be everyone's responsibility, not just the role of the safeguarding team, and this ethos is embedded across the school. Practice is fully aligned with statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, and leaders ensure that safeguarding policies are well understood and consistently applied.

Safeguarding is embedded into the daily life of the school. Staff consistently model safe practices, remain alert to signs of concern, and act swiftly and proportionately when issues arise. Pupils report feeling safe, valued, and confident in knowing who to approach for help. They are taught explicitly about safeguarding through the curriculum, assemblies, and enrichment activities, which equip them with the knowledge and confidence to keep themselves safe both in and out of school, including online. Pupil voice is actively sought and used to shape safeguarding education and support, ensuring that provision remains relevant and responsive.

All staff receive regular, high-quality safeguarding training, with frequent updates on statutory guidance and emerging risks. Training extends to specific safeguarding issues including FGM, PREVENT, county lines, contextual safeguarding, ACEs, and peer-on-peer abuse. Scenarios and case studies are used to build professional confidence and ensure staff can respond appropriately in a wide range of situations. Staff also benefit from reflective practice and supervision opportunities to strengthen their safeguarding understanding and resilience. Safeguarding approaches are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, including those who do not communicate verbally, ensuring that all pupils are protected and supported.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs provide strong, visible leadership. Their work is supported and challenged by a safeguarding trustee, and external audits are used to ensure systems remain rigorous and effective. Safeguarding systems are subject to regular internal review, and leaders routinely reflect on safeguarding cases to identify learning and refine practice. The use of CPOMS ensures secure, consistent, and thorough record-keeping, supporting accountability and enabling early intervention. Safeguarding information is shared appropriately, ensuring that patterns are recognised and addressed without delay.

The school works in close partnership with external agencies, including social care, health services, the police, and voluntary organisations, to ensure pupils and their families receive timely and effective support. Multi-agency working is a genuine strength of the school, ensuring barriers to learning and wellbeing are reduced. A vulnerability index is used to identify and monitor risk, enabling the safeguarding team to prioritise need and tailor interventions. Leaders monitor safeguarding data and trends to inform strategic planning and ensure continuous improvement.

Safer recruitment practices are embedded and fully compliant with statutory requirements. All staff and volunteers undergo appropriate checks, and induction processes place safeguarding at the centre of expectations. Allegations and concerns are managed in line with clear, well-understood procedures, with records demonstrating robust and timely responses. Leaders follow local authority procedures and ensure that all safeguarding decisions are accessible for scrutiny.

Pupils are kept safe and feel safe at The Rowans. The safeguarding culture is proactive, reflective, and dynamic, ensuring that risks are identified early and managed effectively. Staff go beyond compliance, demonstrating a genuine commitment to protecting children and promoting their welfare. As a result, pupils thrive in a safe, nurturing environment where safeguarding is at the heart of school life.

Inclusion

Overall grade:

Exemplary

Inclusion is a cornerstone of The Rowans' ethos and practice. As a special and alternative provision setting, it is not an add-on but embedded in the very fabric of the school. All pupils, regardless of background or need, are welcomed, valued, and supported to succeed. This is reflected in strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, and in the school's culture of high expectations and belonging.

Pupils learn together in collaborative and supportive environments, building positive relationships and developing social skills alongside their academic learning. Staff provide calm, consistent, and nurturing support throughout the day, fostering a safe atmosphere where every child feels secure and respected. Pupil voice is actively promoted through the school council, class discussions, and individual feedback, with their views shaping decisions and provision.

Teaching is responsive and inclusive, with staff deploying a broad range of strategies and personalising approaches to meet the needs of every pupil. Learning environments are carefully adapted with visual supports, structured routines, and accessible resources so that all pupils can engage with a broad and ambitious curriculum. Staff make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities can access all aspects of school life. Achievement and success are celebrated widely, recognising both academic and personal growth. Restorative practice underpins the school's approach to relationships, enabling pupils to manage conflict and understand their emotions. Classrooms and shared spaces are deliberately designed to provide safe, calm learning environments, with sensory resources and trusted adults available to ensure pastoral care is strong and consistent. Through these well-embedded practices, pupils develop a strong sense of belonging and are empowered to thrive.

These inclusive practices have been sustained over time, resulting in transformational outcomes for pupils with SEND, those who are disadvantaged, and those known to social care. Pupils consistently achieve and flourish across all areas of school life.

Leaders demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the complex challenges pupils face and act swiftly to identify and address emerging needs. A wide range of diagnostic tools, including the vulnerability index, Boxall Profiles and detailed baseline data, ensures early identification of barriers to learning. Interventions are evidence-based, personalised, and regularly reviewed for impact through structured monitoring cycles. Leaders systematically monitor the progress of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, adjusting provision in response to changing needs. Where specialist expertise is required, leaders are proactive in engaging external partners to secure comprehensive academic, social, and therapeutic support. The school's trauma-informed practice underpins this approach, creating a highly responsive and nurturing environment.

Support for disadvantaged pupils is sharply focused and driven by robust analysis of data and lived pupil experience. Leaders prioritise reducing inequality through well-planned interventions that address academic gaps alongside wider barriers such as attendance, engagement, and well-being. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from access to mentoring, therapeutic input, enrichment opportunities, and life skills development. Staff are well-trained to understand the barriers these pupils face and ensure that inclusive practice in the classroom consistently meets their needs. Inclusion is embedded in whole-school improvement planning and professional development, with staff supported to build expertise in inclusive teaching.

Inclusion is embedded in whole-school improvement planning and professional development. Staff receive high-quality, evidence-informed training that builds expertise in inclusive teaching and trauma-informed practice, ensuring consistency and depth across the school.

SEND provision is equally strong. A skilled SENCO, as part of the senior leadership team, ensures the graduated response is applied consistently and effectively. Staff adapt learning confidently and demonstrate high aspirations for pupils with SEND. The curriculum is flexibly designed to meet diverse profiles, with access to bespoke pathways including sensory regulation programmes, therapeutic input, and targeted academic support. Leaders respond rapidly to changes in need, particularly in the secondary phase, where the complexity of additional needs has increased over time. Early identification, personalised support, and embedded inclusive practice enable pupils with SEND to be fully included in all aspects of school life and achieve positive outcomes. Pupils known to children's social care are supported through robust multi-agency working and high-quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs). The designated teacher ensures PEPs are regularly reviewed and used to inform academic and pastoral support. The school works closely with virtual school heads and social workers to ensure pupils' opportunities are maximised and barriers are addressed swiftly. The Rowans actively contributes to system-wide improvement through strategic engagement with Medway's SEND partnership, sharing best practice with other schools and professionals, and supporting local authority initiatives to improve inclusive provision.

Leaders at The Rowans actively engage with Medway's SEND partnership, contributing to strategic discussions and ensuring the school's provision aligns with local priorities. The school promotes the local offer through parent communications, website links, and staff guidance, helping families access wider support. Leaders collaborate with the local authority to support transitions, joint assessments, and shared training opportunities.

Inclusion at The Rowans is not only embedded but exemplary. Leaders' actions have a transformational impact on pupils' outcomes and experiences. Barriers to learning and well-being are reduced exceptionally well, and pupils thrive in a culture of high expectations, safety, and belonging. The school's inclusive ethos extends beyond its walls, contributing to wider improvement through strategic partnerships and shared practice.

Curriculum and Teaching

Overall grade:

Strong Standard

The curriculum at The Rowans is coherently planned and sequenced across all key stages, ensuring clear progression in knowledge, skills, and personal development. It is ambitious, inclusive, and tailored to meet the complex needs of our pupils, many of whom have experienced disrupted education, trauma, or unmet SEND needs. The primary curriculum is bespoke and based on 'stage not age', ensuring that learning is developmentally appropriate and accessible. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum is designed to accommodate both short- and long-term placements, including for pupils undergoing statutory assessment. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum offers a broad and relevant suite of qualifications that support pupils' next steps in education, training or employment.

Subject-specific curriculum intents are collaboratively developed and shared, ensuring a unified vision and consistent implementation across the school. Learning journeys are clearly mapped and shared with pupils, supporting their understanding of how knowledge builds over time. Curriculum planning is regularly reviewed and refined in response to pupil needs, cohort profiles, and qualification pathways. Leaders, including the Trust Director of SEND and Governors, conduct regular quality assurance activities, including subject deep dives, to evaluate curriculum quality and progression. These are underpinned by a coaching culture focused on "improve not prove", with learning walks, observations, and work scrutiny used to inform professional dialogue and development.

Reading is a high priority across all key stages. Pupils are supported to read widely and often, with gaps between reading and chronological age identified and addressed through robust interventions. Literacy and numeracy are embedded across the curriculum, supported by a dedicated task and finish group. Key Stage 3 pupils access a weekly 'skills for learning' carousel, including literacy, reading, times tables, and speech and language support. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a clear and unrelenting focus on reading, writing and maths each morning. Pupils are explicitly taught how to apply core skills in real-life contexts, supporting functional literacy and numeracy.

Teachers use the "7 principles of highly effective teaching", including modelling, questioning, and metacognition, to ensure that high-quality inclusive teaching is at the heart of every lesson. Adaptations and personalisation are embedded in planning and delivery, ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum and make sustained progress. Teaching is trauma-informed, relational, and responsive to individual starting points. Lessons are scaffolded and personalised to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners.

The curriculum promotes academic, social, emotional, and personal development. Enrichment and outdoor learning are integral to the offer, supporting well-being and engagement. The Rowans 6 framework at Key Stage 4 captures holistic progress, including academic outcomes alongside emotional and social development, ensuring that the hidden curriculum is recognised and celebrated. Personal development is planned through a robust framework, overseen by a member of the leadership team, and includes careers education embedded across the curriculum. This supports pupils in understanding the world of work and securing appropriate post-16 pathways.

Leadership of teaching is strong and evidence informed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of teaching quality across the school, supported by routine monitoring within a coaching context. All leaders have a teaching commitment and model high-quality, inclusive practice. Professional development is strategically aligned with school improvement priorities and focuses on inclusive, adaptive teaching. CPD includes training on scaffolding, adaptations, and removing barriers to learning. ITT, ECT, and unqualified teachers are supported through a tailored programme that prioritises high-quality inclusive teaching.

Coaching and peer collaboration are embedded to support the implementation of high-quality inclusive teaching (HQIT) and adaptive practice. Feedback is developmental and focused on improving inclusive pedagogy. Monitoring indicates increasing consistency in inclusive teaching across subjects and key stages, and improved staff confidence in delivering adaptive practice. Pupil voice and engagement data show that the personal development offer is perceived as relevant, impactful, and equitable.

Many pupils arrive at The Rowans with significantly low starting points, particularly in reading and core subjects. Embedding high-quality inclusive teaching and adaptive practice remains a key priority to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum, make sustained progress, achieve meaningful outcomes, and be prepared for their next steps. Staff promote an inclusive culture with child-centred policies and practices. Teaching is designed to be responsive, with baseline assessments, aspirational targets, and ongoing assessment guiding personalised planning and intervention. Lessons are scaffolded and personalised to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners. Staff use a range of adaptive strategies to remove barriers to learning and promote progress.

Pupil voice and stakeholder feedback inform curriculum development, ensuring it remains relevant, inclusive, and impactful. The school's values—kindness, commitment, and resilience—are woven throughout the curriculum and teaching, creating a culture where all pupils are supported to thrive.

Achievement

Overall grade: **Strong Standard**

There is a clear expectation at The Rowans that pupils sit national tests where appropriate, and the curriculum is broadly aligned with national expectations. Staff maintain high aspirations for all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. At secondary, pupils access a range of qualifications tailored to their needs and abilities, including GCSEs, BTECs, and vocational awards. In the primary SEMH provision, pupils are supported to sit national assessments in phonics, timetables, and SATs where this is appropriate to their developmental stage and individual needs. Staff know pupils exceptionally well, and this deep understanding ensures that access arrangements and individualised support are in place to enable success.

Although national attainment data for AP settings is no longer routinely published, internal tracking and historic data show that The Rowans performs strongly in comparison to national AP benchmarks. English and maths GCSE outcomes are in line with national AP averages, and the number of qualifications achieved per pupil exceeds national figures. Attainment in vocational and creative subjects—including art, DT, photography, textiles, public services, and engineering—is consistently well above national AP averages.

The school maintains comprehensive and well-analysed data on the attainment and progress of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Swift action is taken where gaps are identified. Regular pupil progress meetings, triangulated with behaviour and attendance data, ensure that staff take collective responsibility for outcomes. A robust intervention programme supports pupils to make progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders rigorously track and analyse pupil progress through termly data drops, work scrutiny, and learning walks. Information from assessments, behaviour logs, and attendance records is triangulated to provide a holistic view of each pupil's academic journey. This enables timely and targeted intervention where progress is not as expected.

The curriculum is designed to be adaptive and responsive. In primary, pupils revisit key numeracy concepts through daily fluency sessions, securing foundational knowledge such as number bonds and times tables. In secondary, vocational subjects like Construction and Land-Based Studies are carefully sequenced to build both practical and theoretical knowledge. Pupils' folders and portfolios demonstrate clear learning trajectories, with consistent feedback supporting rapid progress. Vocational learning is held in equal regard to academic qualifications, and staff collaborate effectively to support both curriculum delivery and individual pupil needs.

Weak writing skills are common on entry. At all key stages, pupils are given structured opportunities to develop their writing through scaffolded models, sentence starters, and explicit instruction. In the primary setting, fine motor skill development is embedded through multisensory activities and an interoception programme. Secondary pupils are taught to structure extended responses, gradually developing clarity and resilience. They also access the 'Fit to Learn' interoception programme, which supports the development of fine and gross motor skills.

Gaps in mathematical understanding are quickly identified through baseline and diagnostic assessments on entry. At primary level, the focus is on securing number fluency and concrete understanding through manipulatives and visual models. Secondary pupils benefit from planning that builds in gap-closing strategies, arithmetic fluency, metamemory tasks, targeted small-group interventions, and consistent use of visual scaffolding. Over time, this enables pupils to access and apply mathematical knowledge to real-life contexts.

A culture of praise, recognition, and celebration reinforces the value of learning. Displays across both phases showcase high-quality work, and pupils are observed engaging purposefully during learning walks. Presentation standards are upheld, and pupils respond positively to feedback.

The Pupil Premium strategy is sharply focused and regularly reviewed. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from targeted academic and therapeutic interventions, as well as access to enrichment opportunities. The school also uses a vulnerability index to identify and support pupils who may not be eligible for Pupil Premium but face significant barriers. In 2024–2025, 69.2% of pupils at The Rowans are eligible for Pupil Premium, compared to 40.8% nationally for APs and PRUs. Academic data shows that disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with their peers. Given the small cohort size, emphasis is placed on individual progress from starting points, with qualitative and quantitative data used to evaluate impact.

SEND pupils in the primary phase receive highly individualised support informed by EHCPs and teacher assessments. Small class sizes and access to sensory spaces support regulation and readiness to learn. In secondary, pupils benefit from personalised resources, adult support, and high-quality inclusive teaching. The graduated approach is embedded across both phases, ensuring that planning and provision are responsive to pupil needs. Academic and personal development targets are reviewed regularly and celebrated through pupil voice, parent feedback, assemblies, social media, and newsletters.

Pupils at The Rowans acquire relevant and appropriate knowledge and fluency in reading, writing, mathematics, and communication. Many arrive significantly below age-related expectations due to

disrupted education, trauma, or unmet needs. In the primary phase, all pupils have identified SEND, primarily SEMH, with many also presenting with ASD, ADHD, and speech and language difficulties.

Despite these challenges, the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills needed for their next steps—whether reintegration into mainstream, transition to post-16 education, or specialist provision.

Communication and language development is a key focus. In primary, visual scaffolding supports expressive language, while in secondary, vocabulary-rich environments and explicit teaching of subject-specific language help pupils articulate their ideas.

Reading is an unrelenting priority. Many pupils arrive as reluctant or struggling readers. Gaps are identified through assessment and addressed through targeted interventions. In primary, pupils receive daily phonics, guided reading, and use Accelerated Reader. In secondary, pupils access 1:1 reading support and participate in reading events throughout the year. As a result, pupils show improved fluency and comprehension, enabling greater access to the curriculum. Subject-specific vocabulary is pre-taught and reinforced through displays and regular use. Comprehension strategies such as summarising, predicting, and clarifying are taught across subjects.

The curriculum is designed to repair educational gaps, restore confidence, and build the core knowledge and skills necessary for progression and next steps. Most pupils are disadvantaged and have complex social and emotional needs, but through consistent, targeted support and a nurturing environment, they leave The Rowans more equipped to thrive in their next stage of education, training, or employment. A task and finish group for 2025–2026 is focused on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, ensuring these remain high-profile and a shared responsibility across all subjects.

Attendance and Behaviour

Overall grade:

Strong Standard

Strategic leadership of attendance is strong to ensure the best possible attendance for each pupil. Attendance remains consistently high when compared to national AP/PRU data and shows significant improvement from pupils' previous schools. This is the result of a robust, multi-layered approach that combines high expectations, personalised support, and strong relationships with families and external agencies.

Leaders place a high priority on attendance and have implemented a clear, strategic plan to identify and address barriers, particularly for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. Attendance is a standing item in regular meetings between the Attendance and Welfare Lead and the Deputy Principal, ensuring that individual pupil attendance is closely monitored, analysed, and acted upon. Leaders use detailed data analysis to identify patterns and trends, enabling early intervention and sustained improvement.

The school works closely with parents, carers, and external agencies to support attendance. Tailored interventions—including welfare support, therapeutic input, and attendance contracts—are used to address underlying issues. Communication with families is proactive, consistent, and underpinned by

a school-designed attendance leaflet and regular updates. Leaders and staff engage in supportive but challenging conversations with families when attendance needs to improve.

The Rowans fosters a strong sense of belonging and community. Pupils feel safe, valued, and supported, which contributes to their willingness to attend regularly. The trauma-informed approach and the emphasis on core values—kindness, commitment, and resilience—create an environment where pupils want to be.

Attendance and punctuality are tracked daily through the day sheet system, lesson by lesson. First-day calling and swift follow-up procedures ensure that absences are addressed promptly.

Attendance is a key measure within the school's bespoke Rowans 6 performance framework, reflecting its importance in the wider school culture.

Attendance is routinely analysed by group (e.g. boys/girls, FSM/non-FSM), but due to the small cohort size, it is always considered on an individual basis. Bespoke, personalised interventions are put in place where needed, rigorously recorded and tracked. Comparisons are made with pupils' attendance at their previous mainstream schools to measure progress.

Attendance is high-profile across the school. Initiatives to celebrate and reward pupils who maintain high attendance or show improvement are regularly communicated to parents and carers and shared via Rowans' social media platforms. These initiatives contribute to a culture where attendance is valued and celebrated.

The Rowans has a clearly defined and strategically led approach to behaviour and attitudes, underpinned by its trauma-informed ethos and core values of kindness, commitment and resilience. Leadership at all levels models high expectations and a shared vision for inclusion, respect, and responsibility. Leaders have established a culture that is highly conducive to learning, in which pupils of all ages flourish.

The Behaviour, Inclusion and Relationships Policy, co-constructed with staff, sets out clear expectations for both pupils and adults. It is supported by a practical behaviour handbook, issued to all staff at induction and embedded in the ongoing CPD programme. Behaviour leadership is proactive, data-informed and relational, supported by daily monitoring systems. Leaders respond swiftly and skilfully to the school's and pupils' changing needs.

Suspensions are rare and only used as a last resort, once alternatives have been fully explored. Regular leadership monitoring, analysis of behaviour data, and pupil voice inform next steps and strategic developments. The leadership team meets fortnightly to review behaviour trends and identify individual support needs, with the principal maintaining oversight across both phases. Tailored and responsive interventions have demonstrable impact.

Staff receive ongoing training in all aspects of safeguarding and behaviour, with notable focus on Team-Teach, FGM, PREVENT, ACEs, and bullying. This ensures safe, respectful, and well-managed environments for all. Staff are confident and consistent in applying agreed expectations and consequences.

Pupils at The Rowans consistently demonstrate engagement, respect, and positive attitudes toward learning, despite complex starting points and histories of exclusion, isolation and long periods with no educational provision. Pupils show self-discipline and dedication to their learning. They learn how to manage their emotions and resolve conflict with others.

The values system and daily pupil tracking sheets in KS3/4 explicitly recognise attitudes such as effort, participation, self-regulation, and teamwork. Pupil progress is reviewed weekly and celebrated in termly Values Days, weekly assemblies, and awards for Student of the Week,

Attendance Star, and Intervention Star. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are supported to regulate their emotions through the Zones of Regulation and earn house points, contributing to the whole-school house system.

The personal development curriculum and robust framework ensure that pupils feel motivated and experience success. Pupils are encouraged to set short- and long-term goals, with a strong focus on aspiration and personal development. Pupil pride is visible in their appearance, effort, and the care they show for their environment and peers. Pupils take pride in their achievements and the work they produce.

A calm, respectful and inclusive climate is demonstrated at The Rowans for the majority of the time. Pupils often enter with significant barriers to learning, including trauma, unmet SEMH needs, or long-term disengagement. The academy's approach ensures all pupils are supported to succeed through relational practice, clear routines, and high challenge with high support. While some pupils experience periods of dysregulation, staff and pupils work collaboratively and consistently to promote long-term positive behavioural and emotional outcomes. Staff make timely, well-chosen, targeted interventions that are regularly reviewed and adapted.

Each pupil has an individualised pupil profile to support effective planning, and the staff team includes dedicated teaching assistants, intervention staff and a Welfare & Attendance Lead. Form tutors and TAs play a central role in building strong relationships and acting as trusted adults. Every member of staff knows every pupil well. Relationships between staff and pupils reflect kindness, courtesy, empathy and respect.

The school's inclusive culture is supported by:

- A school council that enhances pupil voice
- A mobile phone policy (secondary) that promotes focus and a calm environment
- Zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviour, with a clear response to peer-on-peer incidents
- Primary use of house points and Tapestry for reward and parental engagement
- Community engagement, including pupil-led outreach projects
- Overwhelmingly positive parental feedback, with 100% of survey respondents agreeing their child feels safe, supported and cared for. Comments reference the school's "one big family of support" and its "life-changing impact"

Despite significant disadvantage and prior exclusion, pupils at The Rowans show high levels of respect, motivation, and personal growth. They take pride in their school, their learning, and their progress. Leadership ensures a consistent, values-driven approach across both settings. Pupils' positive behaviour, strong relationships and improving attendance reflect a deeply embedded culture of inclusion, dignity and ambition.

Personal Development and Well Being

Overall grade:

Strong Standard

At The Rowans AP Academy, personal development is not an add-on, it is central to our ethos and embedded in every aspect of school life. Our trauma-informed, relational approach ensures that pupils are supported holistically to develop character, resilience, and the skills they need to thrive both in and beyond school.

The personal development programme is coherently planned and tailored to our dual-phase context, ensuring that all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a rich and inclusive offer.

Leaders have established a culture where personal development is high-profile, inclusive, and responsive to pupils' needs. A dedicated leadership role ensures strategic oversight, and the programme is implemented consistently across both the secondary AP and primary SEMH provision. The curriculum includes well-sequenced PSHE, RSE, character education, and enrichment, all aligned with statutory requirements and the needs of our pupils. The school's core values—Kindness, Commitment, and Resilience—are consistently modelled by staff and reinforced through routines, assemblies, and the values points system.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe and healthy, both physically and mentally. They learn how to manage emotions, resolve conflict, and build positive relationships. All staff are trained in trauma-informed practice and act as emotionally available adults. A dedicated Mental Health Lead, on-site therapist, and trained mental health first aiders provide accessible, targeted support. Pupils can self-refer, and support is tailored to individual needs. The school's behaviour curriculum is restorative and relational, promoting accountability and growth. Leaders evaluate the impact of personal development through pupil voice, tracking systems, and external validation (e.g. Carnegie Gold Award for mental health).

Pupils' voices are central to our approach. Regular surveys, student council input, and "Tea and Talk" sessions inform provision and identify gaps in knowledge. Feedback is acted upon and shared through "You Said, We Did" assemblies and staff briefings. Pupil progress meetings combine academic, social, emotional, and SEND data to inform targeted support plans. The school uses a bespoke vulnerability index and ACEs tracker to identify and respond to need, ensuring timely and appropriate support through therapeutic interventions, counselling, or external services. This data-informed approach ensures that pupils receive the right support at the right time.

The school's careers programme is Gatsby-aligned and led by a senior leader. Pupils are well-prepared for post-16 pathways through high-quality careers education, employer engagement, and work experience. Additional support is provided for pupils with EHCPs or those at risk of becoming NEET. Pupils understand their options and are supported to make informed decisions about their futures.

All pupils have equitable access to enrichment and wider opportunities. Participation is tracked to ensure no pupil is left behind. Pupils engage in a wide range of activities, including trips, cultural events, Enrichment Week, Values Days, and themed assemblies. These experiences nurture pupils' talents and interests and support their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The school promotes equality of opportunity and celebrates diversity. Pupils are taught to respect differences and understand the importance of protected characteristics and fundamental British values.

Pastoral care is proactive, and pupil centred. Staff know pupils well and are vigilant in identifying those who need additional support. The welfare and attendance lead works closely with families and external agencies to ensure wraparound care. Staff receive regular training on mental health and well-being, and any stigma is actively challenged. The school has produced accessible resources for pupils, parents, and visitors on topics such as mental health, ACEs, and SEND. Well-being is measured using

the Boxall Profile, Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale, and the Resilience Framework, ensuring that interventions are evidence-informed and impactful.

The Rowans ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, have equitable access to the full personal development offer. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive and ambitious, with adaptations made to meet individual needs. The interventions teams ensure vulnerable pupils receive timely and appropriate support. The school consistently supports the personal development of pupils through a well-planned, inclusive, and impactful programme.

Pupils at The Rowans are nurtured to become successful learners, confident individuals, and active, responsible citizens. They are reflective, resilient, and well-prepared for life beyond school. The breadth and depth of the personal development offer, combined with strong leadership, inclusive practice, and a clear vision, ensure that personal development and well-being are a strength of the school.

Leadership and Governance

Overall grade:

Strong Standard

Leadership at The Rowans AP Academy is highly effective, strategically driven, and underpinned by a clear moral purpose. The principal provides strong, values-led leadership across both the secondary AP and the newly established primary SEMH provision. The leadership team has successfully overseen the expansion of provision to meet local need, including the development of a bespoke primary SEMH setting and the transition of outreach services to a traded model. Leadership oversight is strategically aligned: the principal holds overarching responsibility for both provisions, while day-to-day leadership of the primary SEMH setting is delegated to an Assistant Headteacher. This structure promotes consistency of vision and shared values, while enabling phase-specific leadership and operational responsiveness.

Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the complex needs of the pupils they serve and act with integrity and professionalism. The school's vision—rooted in trauma-informed practice, inclusion, and high expectations—is consistently modelled and embedded across both phases. Leaders have established a culture in which pupils experience a positive and enriching school life.

There is a strong and sustained track record of improvement, evidenced by the academy's Outstanding Ofsted judgement (November 2021), the successful implementation of new provision, and the school's proactive response to local and national priorities. Leaders are actively engaged in shaping future provision through collaboration with Medway Council and the DfE. They use detailed and insightful analysis of school performance to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and identify priorities for improvement.

The transition from a single academy trust to The Howard Academy Trust has strengthened governance while preserving continuity. Former Trustees now serve as the Local Academy Board (LAB), bringing longstanding knowledge and commitment to the provision. The board includes both experienced governors familiar with the school's unique context and newly appointed members who fill identified gaps, enhancing the board's overall capacity and expertise. Governors use their

knowledge and expertise to provide consistent support and robust challenge across all aspects of the school's work.

Governors demonstrate a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their oversight is strategic, supportive, and challenging, grounded in a deep awareness of the academy's dual-phase structure and the specific needs of its pupils. The LAB is actively engaged in strategic planning, with governance structures in place that ensure effective monitoring of pupil outcomes, safeguarding, personal development, and the quality of education across both the primary and secondary settings.

At Trust level, governance is further strengthened by a Director of SEND who provides regular external scrutiny and quality assurance. This includes monitoring compliance, reviewing the impact of provision, and offering strategic challenge. Key findings and progress updates are routinely reported to the Trust Board, ensuring that governance remains well-informed, focused on continuous improvement, and aligned with statutory responsibilities.

Leaders have cultivated strong, trusting relationships with families, local schools, and the wider community. The academy is highly regarded by both primary and secondary headteachers across Medway and works in close partnership with them to support pupils at risk of exclusion and ensure successful transitions. The Rowans plays an active and respected role in the local education landscape, delivering outreach to local schools and contributing to system-wide improvement.

Communication with parents and carers is regular, open, and solution focused. The school uses a range of platforms—including newsletters, social media, and celebration events—to foster a genuine sense of belonging, partnership, and inclusion. This relational approach underpins the school's ethos and helps build trust with families who may have previously felt disengaged or isolated from education.

Staff well-being is a clear priority. Leaders are visible, approachable, and responsive to staff feedback. Workload is carefully considered in decision-making, and staff feel valued and supported. Professional development is a strength, with coaching, mentoring, and leadership opportunities embedded across the school. The school's culture of relational practice extends to staff as well as pupils, contributing to high levels of staff retention and morale.

The Rowans embraces the DfE Staff Wellbeing Charter, and staff report high levels of job satisfaction and support. There is a current focus on the use of assistive technologies to support workload and well-being.