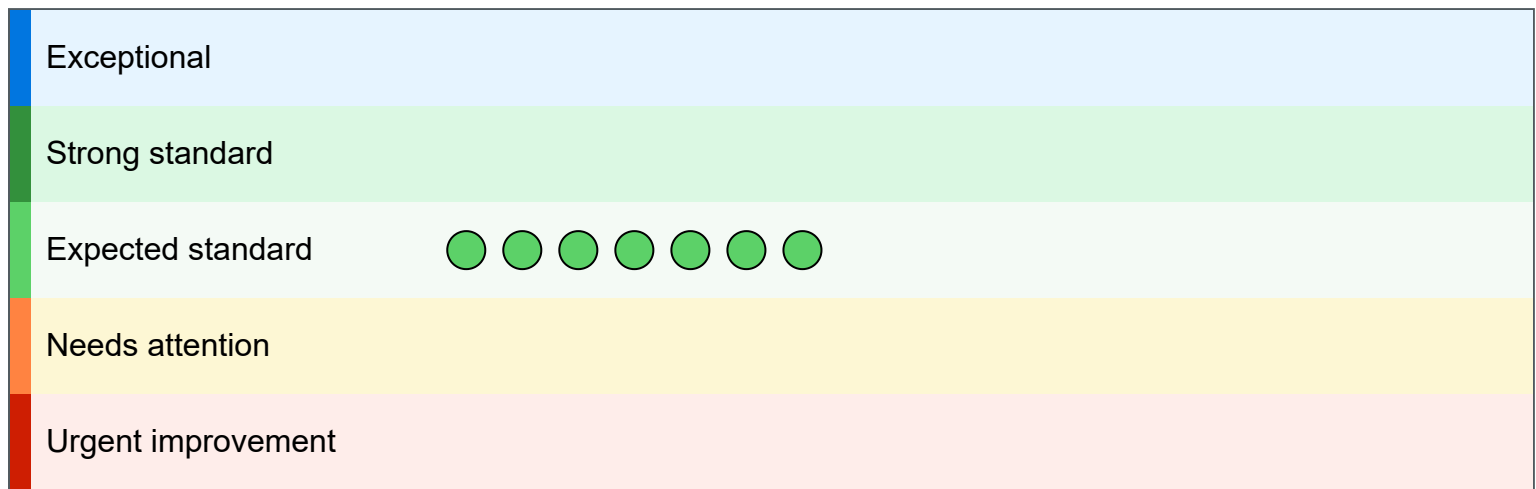


Northfield Road Primary School

Address: Northfield Road, DY2 9ER

Unique reference number (URN): 147155

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy learning. The curriculum inspires them to engage positively in lessons. Most pupils learn the key knowledge that the school has identified, including in the early years, where developing a wide vocabulary helps children communicate confidently. The school ensures that pupils with lower starting points make accelerated progress so that any gaps begin to close quickly. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve outcomes close to national averages and are typically well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and others with barriers to learning typically achieve well. This results in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is slightly better than similar groups of pupils nationally. The key knowledge that the school wants pupils to know and remember across the wider curriculum is not yet as securely understood by pupils. This affects how well they progress through a small number of curriculum subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' actions to manage and improve attendance are effective. They are rightly proud of the improvements made to how frequently pupils attend school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils now attend as regularly as similar pupils nationally. While a significant number of pupils remain persistently absent, the school's work to support disadvantaged pupils so they attend more regularly has led to marked improvements. Families appreciate the support they receive, and this relational approach is pivotal to the successes achieved so far. Attendance ambassadors are visible each morning and celebrate every child who arrives at school on time.

This is a calm school with an environment that supports learning. Leaders have high expectations of how pupils should behave, and staff support pupils effectively if behaviour does not meet these expectations. Pupils behave very well in lessons and engage positively with learning. The school has worked intelligently to support pupils who occasionally struggle to manage their behaviour. Personalised plans enable staff to support each pupil so they are emotionally ready to learn. Pupils are respectful of one another, value individuals for who they are and demonstrate mutual respect. Pupils report that bullying is not an issue and incidents of discrimination are rare.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a coherently sequenced and ambitious curriculum in most subject areas that helps pupils to gain the knowledge they need at the right time. There is a strong emphasis on pupils developing essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics, such as through daily dictated sentences and carefully structured grammar teaching. This approach is improving pupils' writing accuracy with noticeable effect. Teachers also deliver well-designed mathematical fluency sessions. Pupils' regular revisiting

of prior learning supports them to recall key facts and apply their knowledge with growing confidence, although this is not yet consistent in subjects across the wider curriculum.

At times, a small number of pupils are given tasks that do not precisely match their current stage of learning. These tasks either lack sufficient challenge or are introduced before pupils are fully ready. Leaders recognise this and are actively addressing remaining inconsistencies in task choices and design. Staff make effective and thoughtful adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' language development is promoted across subjects, with ambitious vocabulary placed at the forefront of learning. Pupils use this confidently when discussing their work, which is reflected in their books. Leaders' focus on handwriting further supports older pupils to write fluently and confidently.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that children in the early years get a positive and ambitious start to their educational journey. This is reflected in a carefully sequenced curriculum that takes into account the many children who struggle with communication and language when they start school.

Staff interact and engage with children in a warm and purposeful way. The setting is steeped in opportunities to develop children's language. Staff rapidly identify any gaps that children have with their communication and set appropriate targets to help them improve. This includes disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Reading is clearly prioritised in the early years. Phonics is taught from the start when children join the school. Staff ensure that children learn to read accurately and fluently. High-quality texts inspire rich talk and play. Children already know and follow school routines. Staff focus on emotional regulation and positive parental partnerships, supported through home visits and regular school-home communication. This helps children to feel safe, confident and ready to learn. All of these actions result in most pupils being well prepared for their next stage of education.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Northfield Road Primary School is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to learning have their needs met well because staff care deeply about pupils' achievement and development. Leaders identify pupils' individual needs promptly through well-established and effective assessment approaches.

Staff know pupils well. Thoughtful adaptations to classroom activities reduce barriers to learning. These ensure that pupils thrive. Carefully considered approaches, such as different start-of-the-day routines and access to breakfast before school, help pupils feel welcome and ready to learn. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils access clubs, visits and wider opportunities. This reflects a genuinely inclusive culture.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and use this information to judge the impact of interventions. They refine support effectively when needed. Staff training has rightly focused on high-quality teaching. Those with responsibility for leading inclusion strive to strengthen the provision for pupils with barriers to learning even further. Leaders work constructively with families and external professionals to shape the support that pupils receive and to raise aspirations. The school's SHINE provision provides nurturing, alternative support for pupils with identified needs. Pupils are reintegrated into their classrooms successfully after receiving this intervention. The pupil premium strategy is well designed to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. The additional funding is used thoughtfully to ensure that all pupils benefit from the same opportunities.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The trust has taken decisive action to strengthen the school's leadership team, and these steps have already had a positive impact. Leaders understand what the school does well and have accurately identified the areas requiring further development. The impact of this focused work is becoming evident through improvements in attendance and the teaching of writing.

Governors are committed to supporting leaders and take an active role in ensuring that pupils receive the education, care and support they deserve. The school's work is strengthened by the trust's effective support. It provides oversight that helps leaders remain focused on sustained improvement. Leaders and governors place pupils at the centre of decisions, guiding strategic direction. Their determination to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of decision-making is clear and is demonstrated in practice and priorities to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and thrive. The leadership team has prioritised high-quality, ongoing training so staff are equipped to meet the school's aims. This commitment has helped build a cohesive, motivated workforce. Staff feel valued, and leaders consider wellbeing and workload when planning improvements. As a result, staff are well positioned to keep pupils' needs first and to play an active role in the positive changes taking shape across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Personal development and wellbeing are becoming strengths of the school. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the range of opportunities available to them. The personal development programme is thoughtfully designed, age-appropriate and helps pupils reflect on their beliefs, understand right and wrong and think about ethical issues in meaningful ways.

Leaders listen carefully to pupils' ideas and act on them, such as engaging with national events and charity work that matters to pupils. This illustrates the strong sense of community and family spirit that characterises Northfield Road. Pupils are taught to recognise and manage their emotions well. This is particularly effective for pupils who face barriers to learning or wellbeing and those needing additional help with self-regulation so they are ready to learn.

Enrichment plays an important role in school life. Pupils enjoy zoo and museum visits, cultural experiences and residential trips that develop their independence and knowledge of the wider world. They benefit from leadership roles, including prefects, safeguarding ambassadors and peer mediators. These roles help older pupils develop confidence, cooperation, conflict-resolution skills and responsibility. Pupils are beginning to understand how fundamental British values, such as democracy and tolerance, apply to their lives. Leaders take steps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care, can take full advantage of the wider curriculum offer.

Leaders have sequenced personal, social and health education to help pupils understand healthy relationships and the risks they may face online and offline. Strong pastoral systems, wellbeing assessments, mindfulness activities and targeted interventions help pupils feel safe and cared for. Pupils trust staff and feel confident that concerns, including bullying, are dealt with quickly. Partnerships with parents and carers are warm and productive, supported through workshops, coffee mornings and regular communication so that families feel included and supported. These combined efforts create an environment where pupils thrive academically and personally, feel a strong sense of belonging and are equipped with the emotional resilience, social awareness and confidence needed to contribute positively to their school and the wider community now and in their future lives as citizens.

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

Pupils at Northfield Road genuinely value being part of the school community. Each pupil is known, understood and included. Staff build warm, purposeful relationships that help pupils feel safe. This contributes to pupils' positive attendance. Staff are positive role models, and pupils mirror their example in how they treat one another. The respect pupils show one another is clear in the confidence with which they say that bullying is not a worry for them. In this nurturing and caring environment, where pupils are at the heart of every decision, pupils thrive.

Pupils rise well to the behaviour expectations set for them. They want to learn because staff engage them effectively and adapt lessons so that learning is meaningful and accessible for all. As a result, pupils typically achieve in line with age-related expectations. When pupils need extra help, they receive timely and targeted support. Pupils value the difference this makes to their learning.

Pupils appreciate the rich experiences beyond the academic curriculum. They relish leadership opportunities. Junior leaders proudly wear their navy jumpers so that they can be easily recognised by other pupils, parents and staff. Clubs are open to all pupils. Leaders work hard to ensure that every pupil can be involved. This commitment extends to residential trips, which all pupils are encouraged to attend and supported to access.

When pupils go 'above and beyond', values assemblies recognise and celebrate this. These experiences prepare pupils to be active, respectful members of their wider community and to contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the tasks and activities that pupils are given are designed to build effectively on what they already know and can do so that they build knowledge and skills more securely at each stage of learning.
 - Leaders should continue to develop some curriculum areas so that all areas are designed and implemented well. The essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn at each stage, for each subject, should be clearly identified to ensure pupils remember what they have been taught and achieve well.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Stour Vale 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), Rachel Salter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Williams.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders in school, the CEO, the trust's executive leaders, the chair of the trust board and the chair of the local governing board during the inspection.

Information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

There is a new acting headteacher, who has been in post since September 2024.

Acting Headteacher: Gareth Ludlam

Lead inspector:

Keri Baylis, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:


Matt Fletcher, His Majesty's Inspector

Rob Matthews, His Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Jordan, 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

373

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

40.21%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

4.56%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support

13.67%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	46%	61%	Below
2022/23	67%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	59%	74%	Below
2022/23	80%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	82%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	77%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	46%	Close to average
2024/25	62%	47%	Above
2023/24	37%	46%	Close to average
2022/23	57%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25	73%	63%	Close to average
2023/24	53%	62%	Close to average
2022/23	68%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	59%	Close to average
2024/25	69%	59%	Close to average
2023/24	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23	71%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	69%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23	71%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	68%	-16 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	62%	69%	-8 pp
2023/24	37%	67%	-31 pp
2022/23	57%	66%	-9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25	73%	81%	-8 pp
2023/24	53%	80%	-26 pp
2022/23	68%	78%	-10 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	65%	78%	-12 pp
2024/25	69%	78%	-9 pp
2023/24	57%	78%	-21 pp
2022/23	71%	77%	-6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25	69%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24	60%	79%	-19 pp
2022/23	71%	79%	-8 pp

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 (1 term)	4.9%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	5.7%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	15.7%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	15.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	15.3%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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