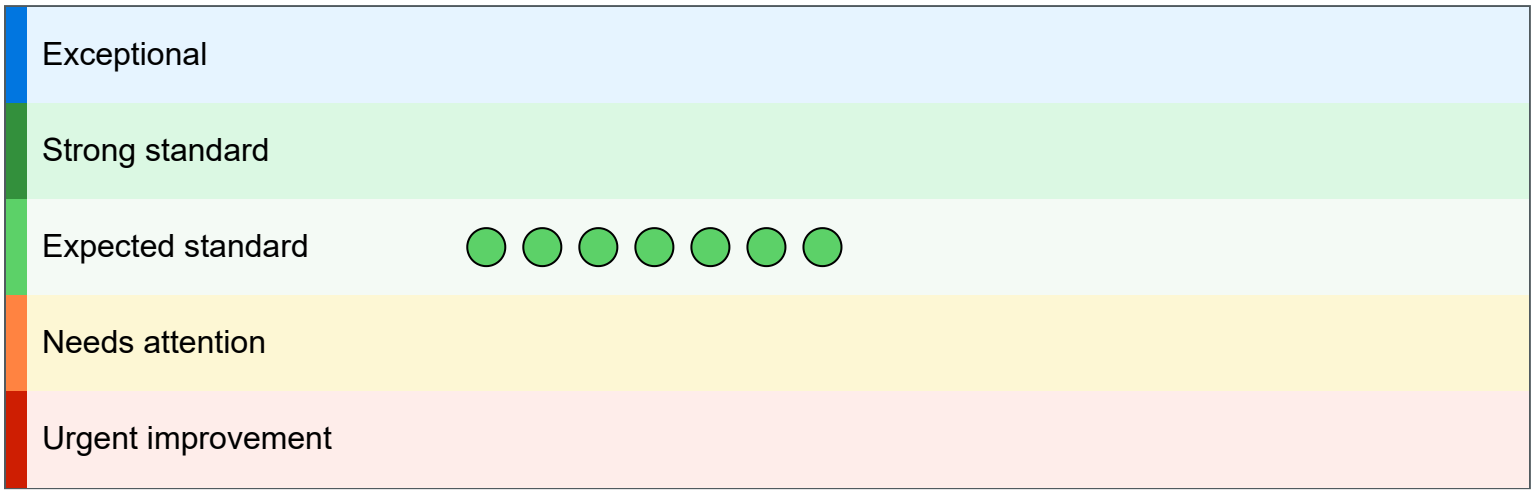
Collierley Nursery and Primary School

Address: Front Street, Dipton, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 9DJ

Unique reference number (URN): 149616

Inspection report: 2 June 2026



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, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well. This is reflected in the end-of-Year-6 results, strong outcomes in the Year 4 multiplication check and improving achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Leaders have recently begun addressing gaps in pupils' grammar, spelling, and handwriting. There are early signs that this is having an impact. However, further work is needed to ensure that across all year groups this consistently improves at pace.

Across the curriculum, pupils can generally explain core knowledge, such as in history and geography. For example, they can explain their understanding of the Holocaust and the differences between São Paulo and Durham. Pupils generally make some connections across different sections of the curriculum. However, this is not consistent. For example, in history, while pupils study more than one civilisation, they cannot articulate what a civilisation is and how the Mayans and the Egyptians are similar or different.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make progress from their different starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils attend school well, including those with special educational needs and/or abilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have further strengthened their approach to improving attendance. This is helping to reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent. Parents, carers, and pupils are clear about why good attendance matters. Pupils enjoy the range of individual and class rewards. This supports them in attending school regularly.

Pupils' behaviour, particularly in lessons, is a strength of the school. This is because leaders have established high expectations for all pupils and make it clear what good behaviour looks like. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour and to understand why this is important for keeping themselves and others safe. Staff have built positive and warm relationships with pupils. Politeness and manners are promoted and modelled. From a young age, pupils are taught to develop independence and take responsibility for looking after the environment. For example, 2-year-olds are encouraged to hang up their aprons after use, and older children clear up after dinner.

Pupils feel safe and report that bullying or unkindness rarely happen. Where they do occur, staff ensure they are addressed quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have carefully considered how to develop a curriculum that is tailored to the school’s context. It is appropriately challenging. The curriculum sets out the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to know from their start in the provision for 2-year-olds

up to the end of Year 6. Tasks are typically well matched to enable pupils to learn key knowledge and develop appropriate skills across the curriculum.

The teaching of mathematics has been strengthened, and pupils' fluency skills are embedded. Pupils can therefore apply their knowledge in solving a range of reasoning problems. Leaders have recently begun improving the teaching of writing. In the early years and Year 1, this is beginning to have an impact. Pupils write with increasing accuracy appropriate to their stage. Across other years and subjects, this is more variable. Pupils' letter formation, pencil grip, spelling and use of grammar are inconsistent, and this is not always addressed swiftly enough by teachers.

The use of assessment during lessons and over time has been developed. Staff typically identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide regular opportunities for pupils to recall prior learning or revisit learning that was not yet secure. This enables pupils to know more and remember more.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders have prioritised the development of the provision in the early years. This work has supported children to have a positive start to their education. Staff ensure that routines across the early years are embedded. Relationships between staff and children, and between children and their peers, are warm and friendly. Children play cooperatively, sharing resources and confidently explaining their learning. Children with learning needs have these quickly identified. Support is quickly put in place to help them secure progress from their starting points.

Staff ensure that language and vocabulary are carefully modelled and reinforced by high-quality interactions. The focus on rehearsing stories, rhymes, and songs helps all children to develop their speech and language, as well as an early interest in reading. The 2-year-olds are provided with a rich range of activities that help them develop pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Their welfare needs are carefully considered and met.

The majority of children in the Reception Year are well prepared for their next stage as they move into Year 1. Although children's starting points are taken into account when planning activities, there is occasional variation in how effective this is. Where this is stronger, the ambition in the tasks provided to children across the provision is closely matched to their individual starting points.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have created an inclusive school. They know pupils well. Throughout the school, staff are vigilant in identifying any special needs which pupils may have or start developing. Where necessary, leaders engage specialist advice to further strengthen the support provided. Plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are developed in collaboration with parents and carers to ensure that staff know how to adapt their teaching appropriately. These plans are generally effective and are updated regularly.

Leaders have implemented a programme of professional development to equip staff to meet a wide range of pupils' needs. As a result, staff typically make effective and timely

adaptations within lessons to support pupils with SEND. Pupils who need support with social, emotional and mental health needs are helped by counsellors, who help them to develop coping strategies and build resilience. Parents and carers are consistently positive about the support their children with SEND receive. They say that it has improved their children's general wellbeing and their love of school.

Leaders use the additional funds allocated for pupils who are disadvantaged to implement evidence-based approaches that help them keep up with their peers. These funds are also used to broaden pupils' experiences, including providing access to after-school clubs and educational visits. Pupils who are disadvantaged typically achieve in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils who are disadvantaged are known to staff. However, their barriers to learning are not always precisely identified and addressed to help them secure better progress in their learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders show determination to develop all aspects of the school. They have recently prioritised strengthening the teaching of phonics, the use of assessment, and pupils' positive attitudes to behaviour. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. However, there is an opportunity to be more rigorous in the quality assurance of pupils' work to ensure that writing standards continue to improve.

Staff are well supported by leaders. Their workload is well considered when introducing new approaches. Additional time is provided for them when they are asked to prepare for new initiatives. Leaders have provided staff with evidence-informed professional development. This has enabled staff to develop their subject knowledge. Links with subject leaders across the trust have further strengthened this. Increasingly, staff have a good understanding of how to identify and meet the needs of pupils with vulnerabilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Those with responsibility for governance have an in-depth knowledge of their statutory duties. They are ambitious for the school and the impact it has on the community it serves. Governors and trustees provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders. This ensures that there is a measurable impact of school improvement actions. They have appropriate oversight of the effectiveness of the additional funding for those who are disadvantaged, including in terms of closing gaps in achievement.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and how it is led and managed. Parents of pupils with SEND say that leaders and staff go the extra mile to meet their children's needs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders deeply care about pupils' personal development and wellbeing. There is a strong focus on developing their characters and helping them to be polite and proactive citizens. Pupils learn to make a difference from a young age. They contribute to improving the school and taking ownership for serving each other through various monitor positions, which they take seriously. They are taught and understand that their opinions matter.

Leaders have carefully planned and considered the personal, social, emotional and health curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils are well equipped for life beyond school. They are taught how to keep safe in school, in the community and online. While pupils know how to keep healthy and have good mental health, they are not always aware of why this is important. Pupils are taught about important British values and protected characteristics through the curriculum and in assemblies. Leaders challenge stereotypes and ensure that pupils learn about other religions and cultures. Although pupils can recall features of other faiths, their understanding of how this learning links to tolerance, individual liberty and respect is less well embedded.

A wide enrichment offer in school and across the trust ensures that pupils have access to wider experiences. These include opportunities for musical performances and sporting activities, including with pupils from other schools. The curriculum is also enriched through a broad range of visits, including a trip to London and a visit to the Houses of Parliament. Pupils recall these well and speak fondly of the visits. They are also introduced to various workplaces, including a visit to a local car manufacturer, to observe the different roles within the company.

Leaders monitor the uptake of enrichment activities. Their work to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who are otherwise disadvantaged, are fully supported to make the most of the school's wider range of opportunities is less well developed.

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

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the community of Collierley Nursery and Primary School. They are warmly welcomed each day by staff who deeply care for their wellbeing. Pupils are happy and feel safe. They enjoy speaking to visitors about the positive contributions they make to the school's ongoing improvement.

Children in early years get off to a positive start. They benefit from a rich environment and positive relationships with staff who know them well. Their communication and language develop quickly because they are given plenty of opportunities to rehearse new words, songs and stories.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They understand why good attendance makes a difference to their ability to learn and develop friendships. Pupils behave well in and out of their lessons. They are polite and respectful. On the rare occasion that any incidents of unkindness occur, staff deal with them swiftly and effectively.

Pupils who have additional needs, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well. Helping reduce any barriers to their learning.

The early years curriculum provides a foundation for children, ensuring they are ready to progress to Year 1. Pupils make progress across the curriculum and benefit from teachers who precisely break down key knowledge into manageable steps. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well by the end of key stage 2.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They know why it's important to treat people who are different to them equally. Pupils learn how to make a positive contribution to the wider community. They relish the leadership opportunities afforded to them. Pupils enjoy the range of activities and experiences that enrich their learning. These include visits to the local church, a farm and the seaside.

Next steps

- Leaders should further embed new systems to ensure pupils in all year groups who have gaps in foundational knowledge, for example letter formation, use of capital letters and spelling, are identified to ensure that support can be provided to benefit their work across all subjects.
- Leaders should build on the recent developments in the key stage 1 curriculum in English, so that standards of writing across the school and across the breadth of the curriculum improve further.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are more closely monitored in their uptake of wider opportunities to ensure access to these is maximised.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Stanley Learning Partnership 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), Mark Stewart and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Thomas Harpe.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and members of the senior and middle leadership teams. The lead inspector also met with the CEO, one of the trustees and the local governing board. Inspectors also spoke to parents, carers and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Headteacher: Angela McDermid

Lead inspector:
Nicky White, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Julie McGrane, Ofsted 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

149
Below 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

196
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.21%

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

5.37%
Above 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

18.12%
Above 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 mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25 (final)	72%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	39%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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 mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25 (final)	67%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	22%	46%	Below
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	22%	62%	Below
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

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 mathematics

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (final)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	22%	67%	-45 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	22%	80%	-57 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	78%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	79%	-24 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

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 (3 term)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	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 (3 term)	14.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.7%	14.6%	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 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.

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