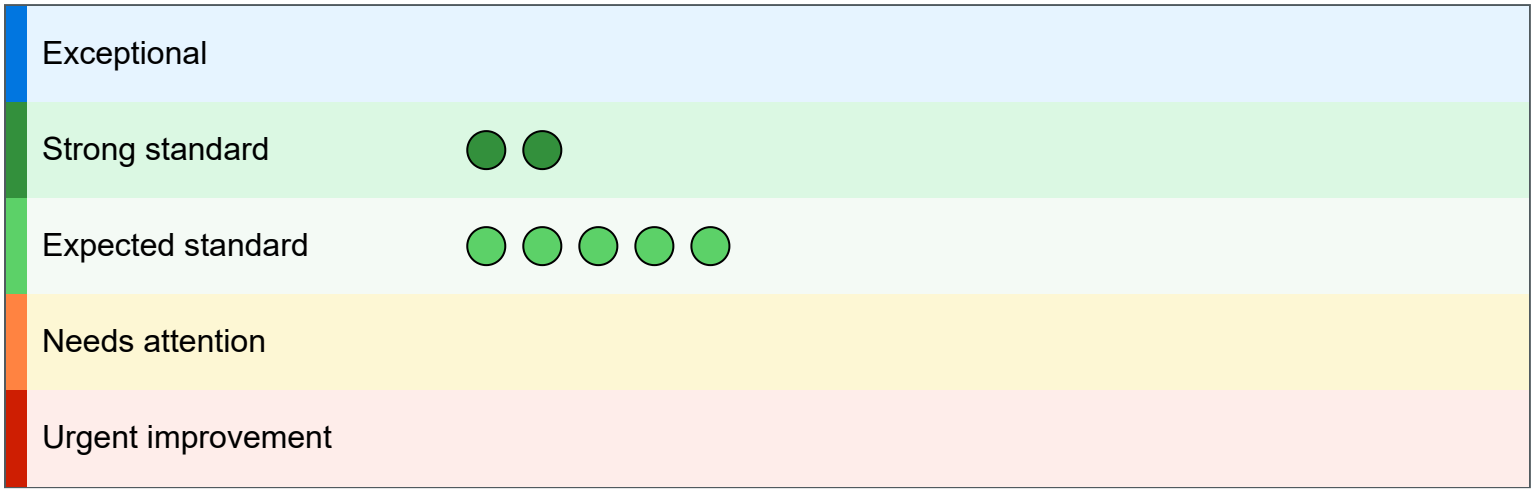
Northbury Primary School

Address: Northbury Close, Barking, Essex, IG11 8JA

Unique reference number (URN): 101196

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.

Strong standard

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have a clear vision that early years will provide children with a highly successful start to their education. Many children start school with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Staff understand this and focus collectively on helping children to develop their speech, vocabulary and confidence from the start. Staff model language with precision. They encourage children to explain and share their ideas during play, stories and group activities, and they provide extensive opportunities for children to practise their spoken language across the different areas of learning. Improved communication helps children to feel part of the early years provision and settled, and it supports them to develop socially.

The curriculum is ambitious and well structured. Through focused teaching and continuous provision, children secure the knowledge and understanding they need to progress through the curriculum and be ready for Year 1. Children's early reading and phonics are prioritised from the start. Teachers have the expertise to teach early reading effectively. Children secure the skills to read with increasing confidence. They are remarkably well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Leaders have robust systems in place for checking the quality of provision in early years. Where they identify priorities, such as in children's early mathematical fluency, they have amended the curriculum and provided targeted training for staff. This is now having a clear impact on children's precision, accuracy and confidence.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The personal development programme is wide ranging and carefully matched to the needs and starting points of all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities access a wide range of specialist opportunities. For example, they work with therapists and attend bespoke clubs, such as gardening, to support language development and confidence when selling their crops at the local market. Personal development is integrated into every aspect of the school's work. For example, the school's '50 things to do before leaving Northbury' challenge is thoughtfully mapped across the curriculum, ensuring pupils experience a wide range of enriching opportunities, such as stargazing at Greenwich Observatory. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to build the resilience, confidence and cultural awareness they need to thrive beyond primary school.

Pupils have the opportunity to add their views to the school's personal, social and health education curriculum. This has influenced the content of the curriculum, such as responding to pupil requests to explore topics such as body image and the increasing use of artificial intelligence. Pupils spoke insightfully about the dangers of 'fake news' and how to recognise unreliable information online. This demonstrates pupils' secure understanding of staying safe when online.

Planned events, such as 'language of the month' and the international pen-pal programme, strongly influence pupils' understanding of tolerance and respect. For example, pupils met peers from a school in Ghana online and shared cultural experiences, such as celebrating

Diwali. Following this project, pupils sent educational equipment to support their partner school. This work helps pupils learn to appreciate different cultures, recognise global connections and understand the importance of reciprocal kindness.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attain broadly in line with national averages. There is an improving picture, with outcomes rising in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils attain particularly well in mathematics, where the school has successfully closed the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. This demonstrates the impact of leaders' work to strengthen the curriculum and approaches to teaching. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well from their individual starting points.

Pupils' work is generally of high quality. As they move through the well-designed curriculum, pupils build a broad and secure body of knowledge and skills across different subjects. This helps to ensure that pupils are well placed to learn more complex ideas, as well as being ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders are rightly prioritising attendance. Working with the national hub, they have created a more rigorous approach to monitoring and improving pupils' attendance. Although pupils currently attend less well than their peers nationally, this is improving over time. This is especially the case for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whose attendance is now stronger compared to these groups nationally. Leaders act quickly when pupils' attendance falls below their high expectations. Leaders have built effective relationships with families, actively looking for solutions and offering practical help and support when it is needed. Through this extensive pastoral work, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen.

In lessons and at social times, pupils demonstrate self-discipline and dedication to their learning. They consistently show high levels of respect for others and rarely need to be reminded about positive behaviour. The school provides excellent wellbeing and pastoral support, such as the 'Haven room', 'chit-chat' drop-in sessions and school counselling, where pupils can go when they need someone to listen or help to manage any worries they may have. Staff respond quickly and sensitively, ensuring pupils feel reassured, understood and well supported.

Bullying is not tolerated. If it happens, pupils know staff will deal with it quickly. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have constructed a well-designed curriculum. It is organised so pupils develop their understanding in a logical order. Knowledge and skills build on what pupils have been taught previously. For example, in science, children in early years describe different materials. This helps older pupils to compare the properties of materials such as metal, wood and plastic using more complex terminology. Similarly, in geography, younger pupils develop an early understanding of place, routes and positional language through creating maps linked to familiar stories. This knowledge is then deepened later, where older pupils learn to use compass directions, coordinates and symbols.

Generally, the curriculum is taught well. Staff have appropriate subject knowledge in different subjects. They explain new ideas clearly and adapt teaching to support pupils' different starting points, including the use of prompts, additional resources and careful reshaping of tasks. Early reading is a high priority, and phonics is taught effectively. Most pupils develop the foundational knowledge they need in reading, written language and mathematics. If pupils struggle in these areas, they are swiftly identified and supported to catch up with their peers. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the expectations staff have around pupils' spoken language. This means that pupils' confidence and clarity vary across year groups and between classes.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders identify pupils’ individual needs accurately and at an early stage. Staff use a range of assessments to understand any barriers to learning experienced by disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known or previously known to children’s social care. Leaders communicate pupils’ additional needs, targets and agreed strategies for support effectively to staff through 'pupil passports'. Staff typically use this information well to provide timely and appropriate support. This includes making appropriate adjustments to the curriculum and approaches to teaching, targeted interventions and effective pastoral care. In addition, 2 specialist classes, ‘the Owl’ and ‘the Willow’, support pupils on the autism spectrum with a highly individualised curriculum delivered by well-trained staff.

As a result of an effective and well-targeted pupil premium strategy, disadvantaged pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 2, especially in mathematics. Leaders’ priorities in this area have also led to a significant reduction in persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils, ensuring they benefit from regular attendance and sustained access to the curriculum and wider opportunities the school offers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

The new headteacher, ably supported by those responsible for governance and the wider leadership team, has established a clear direction for the next stage of the school's improvement. Decisions are consistently made in the best interests of pupils, with a particular focus on those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and

areas for development. Governors support this work, as well as complying fully with their statutory duties.

Tailored professional development aligns closely with school priorities. Leaders work well with external specialists to ensure that staff can fully support pupils with barriers to their learning. Staff, including those at the start of their careers, feel well supported. They appreciate initiatives designed to manage workload and improve wellbeing. Staff are rightly proud to be part of this friendly, happy and ambitious school.

Leaders have established highly positive partnerships with parents and carers. There is extensive support for families to engage in their children's education and feel part of the school community. Parents are positive about the school. They feel their children are making real progress with their learning because of the effective teaching they receive from friendly, approachable staff.

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

Northbury Primary School is a large, vibrant, multicultural community where pupils speak several languages. Diversity is one of the school's greatest strengths, shaping a highly inclusive environment where pupils are known, valued and supported to achieve their potential. Pupils benefit fully from local places of worship, including the neighbouring gurdwara, mosque and historic Quaker burial ground, reflecting the rich cultural and religious diversity that helps define the community. This broadens pupils' experiences as they benefit from the rich cultural heritage that surrounds them.

The school's 'STAR' values, success, teamwork, aspiration and respect, guide all aspects of school life. Pupils' cultural experiences are supported through the school's '50 experiences' programme, which includes opportunities such as holding a bird of prey or going camping. Leaders are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring every pupil becomes a confident, resilient learner who is well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life beyond school.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They know how to raise any concerns they may have and are confident that staff will sort things quickly for them. This helps them to feel safe. They understand the school's rules and routines, which means that learning is rarely disrupted. As a result, pupils generally learn well and achieve outcomes in line with national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged also learn the curriculum well. They receive helpful support that typically reduces any barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to embed high-quality teaching across the school. This includes ensuring there are consistent expectations about the quality, depth and

precision of pupils' spoken language.
- Leaders should build on their success in securing further improvements to attendance for all pupils.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mrs Simona Yassin.

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 leaders, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher : Matthew Murphy

Lead inspector:
Lisa Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Christopher Birtles, Ofsted Inspector
Tom Hart, Ofsted Inspector
David Worrall, Ofsted Inspector
Garry Skerritt, 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

853
Well 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

918
Well 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)

24.62%
Close to 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

1.76%
Below 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

10.55%

Below 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%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	61%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average

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%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	71%	Below

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	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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 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	50%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	44%	Close to average

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	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average

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	69%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	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 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	50%	68%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	51%	67%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 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	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	62%	78%	-17 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 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	72%	78%	-6 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	77%	-19 pp

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	69%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	79%	81%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	79%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	79%	-9 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 (3 term)	5.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	5.9%	Above

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)	16.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.6%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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