Caversham Nursery School

Address: 114 Amersham Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 5NA

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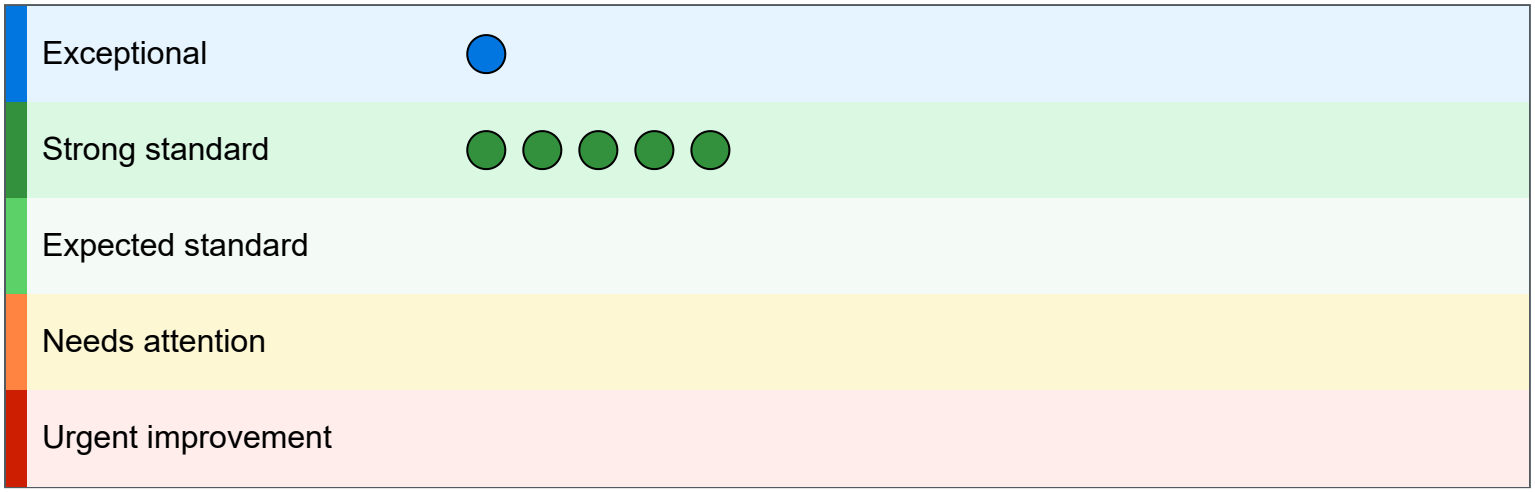
Inspection report: 9 June 2026



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.

Exceptional

Personal development and wellbeing — Exceptional

Personal development is woven into the fabric of the school. Leaders have designed a highly responsive approach that prioritises children's emotional literacy, independence and respect. This enables children to be confident, kind and thoughtful towards others. This impact is especially profound for the most vulnerable children, who are so well prepared for life beyond the school. Through consistent discussions around the impact of actions on others, children learn to recognise feelings. They understand right and wrong as well as resolve conflict constructively. Staff model empathy. They reinforce that being sorry involves repairing relationships, not simply words.

Children develop exceptional social and self-care skills. They learn to take turns, cooperate and think of others. For example, children see when their peers are sad and give them a resource such as a photo of a loved one to make them feel better. Visits to local shops help children to see their role in the community. Expert staff train children in self-care to the highest level. For example, children recognise when they need a change of clothes and do so independently and then carry on seamlessly with their learning. Leaders ensure that children value diversity and difference. Children learn about, and develop a deep understanding of, festivals that are important to their families such as Lunar New Year, Diwali and Holi.

Leaders promote healthy lifestyles very effectively. Children's supervised choice and preparation of snacks, alongside visits to the local woods, support their physical and mental wellbeing. Children learn about keeping safe, including when out in the community.

Disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full range of experiences. Pastoral support is effective. Leaders work closely with families to help children develop confidence, resilience and curiosity. Children are well prepared socially and emotionally for the expectations of Reception.

Strong standard

Achievement — Strong standard

Children make rapid progress from their individual starting points. They develop the key skills they need and build these skills over time. The focused emphasis on communication and language leads to clear improvements in children's vocabulary. Their confidence in speaking and ability to sustain conversation develop well. Early writing and mathematical understanding develop securely. Children begin to understand that letters carry meaning. This is done through recognising the sounds in their names and engaging with rhymes and stories.

Disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make positive progress. Targeted speech and language support, teaching that is tailored to

children’s needs and regular pupil-focused reviews reduce barriers to learning. Leaders monitor the impact of interventions termly and adjust provision where needed.

Daily observations and children's work show that they are gaining the key skills and confidence needed for Reception. By the time they leave, children achieve well from their starting points. They are exceptionally independent, socially aware and ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders recognise that children being in school is important for their learning. Attendance is improving. Leaders place clear emphasis on the importance of regular attendance. They communicate this consistently to parents and carers. Expectations are shared before children start school through home visits and induction meetings. Where absence occurs, staff promptly follow up and work supportively with families to address any barriers.

Leaders track attendance patterns precisely and responsively. They consider the needs of vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where necessary, they make reasonable adjustments and provide support to encourage regular attendance. Leaders remain vigilant and proactive in promoting consistent routines that support children's learning and wellbeing.

The behaviour of children is excellent. Staff understand and follow the school's behaviour policies. This ensures a consistent approach throughout. Leaders have established a calm, orderly and nurturing environment. Staff use approaches that help them respond calmly and sensitively to children's feelings and behaviour. As a result, children learn to think about their emotions. They begin to resolve disagreements constructively. Children show extremely positive attitudes to learning. They focus well during group sessions and join in both adult-led and child-initiated activities with enthusiasm.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

The meticulously designed curriculum helps children learn new skills in a logical sequence. It is regularly refined, responding to children's changing needs. It is also shaped around an understanding of local families. There is clear progression as children move through Nursery. Leaders prioritise communication and language, early reading, early writing, and mathematics. This helps to ensure that children secure firm foundations for Reception.

Experiences such as visits to the local woods, trips and cultural celebrations are woven naturally into everyday learning. Daily story sessions promote reading. Older children develop early sound awareness in a structured way.

Leaders recognise the many strengths of the provision and identify what needs further refinement. Staff training is mapped out precisely across the year so that knowledge and skills build progressively. It is responsive to the needs of staff and develops their understanding in a deliberate and sustained way. This strengthens staff subject knowledge and promotes consistency.

Teaching is purposeful. Adults model language, extend vocabulary and deepen children's thinking during adult-led and child-initiated activities. The environment promotes independence, curiosity, and meaningful play. Assessment identifies starting points. It informs adaptations, particularly for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff target support so that every child can access the curriculum successfully. Partnerships with parents support continuity between home and school.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that every child feels welcomed and included. Staff identify children's needs early through careful and comprehensive assessments. They also use valuable information gathered from home visits. There is a clear focus on developing children's vocabulary. Well-trained staff quickly recognise the needs of disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff provide tailored support through precise, individualised plans that help these children thrive.

Leaders use additional funding strategically. They have a clear focus on reducing barriers to learning, especially in speech and language. The school works with a speech and language specialist. This supports staff training and ensures children receive appropriate provision. Staff adapt activities and support to meet children's differing needs. The consistent use of visuals and structured approaches helps children with additional needs access the full curriculum.

Staff regularly review children's learning. Leaders analyse termly progress to check the impact of additional support. Staff receive regular training linked to specific children's needs. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals. Together, they shape provision and raise aspirations. Inclusion is embedded in daily practice and has a positive effect on children's learning and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They maintain a clear focus on communication and language, inclusion and behaviour. Leaders also ensure that staff are supported to deliver these effectively. Self-evaluation is reflective and grounded in evidence. This includes assessment information and regular review of provision for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders identify development priorities promptly and ensure that work is focused in the right areas. Vulnerable children are central to decision-making. Leaders use additional funding strategically, particularly to enhance speech and language support. Leaders monitor its impact and adjust provision where necessary.

Precise and layered planning of professional learning opportunities matches the needs of both the children and the staff sharply. Staff development is recognised as an area of real expertise within the school. Leaders regularly train and develop other professionals both locally and nationally in aspects of early years practice. Early career staff and those new to

roles receive targeted support. Staff report that their workload is manageable and that they feel well supported.

Governors understand their statutory duties and receive regular reports on all areas of the school's work. They provide appropriate challenge and support. Leadership and governance are aligned and focused on securing positive outcomes for all children.

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

Children love coming to this nursery, where relationships with families sit at its heart. From the moment they arrive, children thrive. They are welcomed into calm, well-organised classrooms. Children settle quickly and learn to play and learn alongside one another. They behave well. Staff model kindness and help children to understand and talk about their feelings. Disagreements are resolved thoughtfully. If children become upset or overwhelmed, adults provide gentle, consistent support. This helps children to calm down and return to their learning.

Children feel safe. Staff know families so well. They build positive relationships through home visits and regular communication. This knowledge ensures that any worries are identified quickly and acted on. Adults supervise carefully as children move freely between indoor and outdoor spaces. They teach children how to keep themselves safe, for example when climbing large equipment, using tools to prepare fruit at snack time or serving themselves at lunchtime. This results in children having a deep sense of belonging.

Children enjoy learning. They listen intently to well-chosen books, join in with repeated refrains, and discuss key ideas from a text thoughtfully. Adults encourage rich conversation. They introduce new vocabulary skilfully. Children make up their own stories. They buy and sell items in the shop, participate in bug hunts, and confidently use equipment in the outdoor area. These experiences build their language, physical development, and early mathematical understanding. Local visits and festival celebrations help children to learn about the community around them and the wider world.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are disadvantaged, achieve very well from their starting points. Accurate assessment and well-targeted support in all areas, helps to reduce barriers to learning. Staff work closely with families to promote regular attendance and punctuality. This helps children make the most of their time in school. By the time they leave, children are confident, impressively independent, and very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine assessment approaches so that they improve children's educational experiences even further.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Julia Cottee.

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

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

Information about this inspection:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and staff. They also spoke with the school's improvement partners from the local authority. The lead inspector met with members of the governing board, including the chair.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school is part of the Reys hard federation of schools.

Executive headteacher: Joanne Budge

Lead inspector:
Neil Pilsworth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Julie Sackett, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

55

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

3.2%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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

0.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Well 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.

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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