

Birklands Primary School

Address: Appleton Street, Warsop, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG20 0QF

Unique reference number (URN): 140659

Inspection report: 7 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

High aspirations and a determination for every pupil to succeed shapes every aspect of the school's work. Staff know pupils well and use their understanding of their individual starting points to help pupils make progress and achieve well. As pupils move through the school, they develop knowledge, confidence and resilience. This helps pupils to make secure progress across the curriculum, including beyond published outcomes. By the time pupils leave the school, they are well prepared for secondary education and future success.

Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. This is highlighted in the school's published outcomes which are above national comparators. Leaders place considerable emphasis on securing the foundations that pupils need for future success. In reading, phonics, writing and mathematics pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to access learning confidently across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make positive progress from their starting points. Pupils who face barriers to learning receive effective support that helps them participate fully and achieve alongside their peers.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Trusting relationships with families sit at the heart of the school's work to improve attendance. Leaders understand the challenges that can affect pupils' attendance and work closely with families to remove barriers where possible. They monitor attendance carefully, identify concerns early and provide support which reflects pupils' individual circumstances. Leaders determined and compassionate approach results in rapid and sustained improvement, particularly for pupils who have previously struggled to attend regularly. Persistent absence has reduced considerably and increasing numbers of pupils attend school consistently. Staff understand the links between attendance, safeguarding and achievement and share responsibility for helping pupils to attend regularly. This work enables more pupils to benefit fully from the opportunities that school offers.

A calm and respectful culture reflects the school's clear expectations and positive relationships. Pupils understand what leaders expect and respond well to consistent routines. Staff help pupils learn how to make positive choices and understand the impact of their actions on others. They adapt support appropriately for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that pupils can meet expectations successfully. Pupils focus well on their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons. Bullying is uncommon. When concerns arise, staff act quickly and effectively. Leaders take any form of discrimination, harassment, abuse or violence seriously and follow clear procedures to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils learn in an environment where they feel safe, respected and ready to learn.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion shapes daily life at Birklands. Leaders and staff know pupils and families well and place equal importance on pupils' achievement, well-being and belonging. Parents and carers trust staff to work alongside them when challenges arise.

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. They use regular reviews, assessment information and professional expertise to spot emerging needs and remove barriers to learning. Staff adapt support swiftly when pupils require something different, helping pupils access learning successfully and participate fully in school life.

Pupils with barriers to learning receive effective support. Leaders use additional funding thoughtfully to strengthen teaching, provide wider opportunities and remove financial barriers that might otherwise limit participation. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils take part in the full life of the school, including clubs, visits and residential experiences.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from carefully planned support that reflects their individual needs. Staff review provision regularly and work closely with families and external professionals to ensure that support remains effective. Provision within The Nest gives additional help for pupils with more complex needs and enables them to access learning successfully while remaining an integral part of the school community. Leaders also support pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care, alongside other pupils facing barriers to learning or well-being. They monitor these pupils carefully and adapt support when needed. As a result, pupils feel included, valued and well supported to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

A clear sense of purpose drives the work of leaders and governors at Birklands. During a period of significant change, they have remained focused on improving pupils' experiences and outcomes while maintaining the school's important role within the community. Leaders know the school well. They evaluate strengths and areas for development accurately and take decisive action when improvements are needed. Their priorities reflect a clear understanding of pupils' needs and the school's ambition for every child to succeed.

Leaders have strengthened systems, developed leadership capacity and created a culture of continual improvement. Professional learning plays an important role in this work. Staff benefit from coaching, training and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across the trust. This helps staff develop their expertise and contributes to greater consistency in practice across the school.

Consideration for staff wellbeing forms part of leaders' decision-making. Staff value the support they receive and appreciate leaders' efforts to manage workload sensibly while maintaining high expectations. This has helped to create a positive culture in which staff feel trusted, supported and motivated to contribute to school improvement.

Partnerships with families and the wider community are a notable feature of the school's work. Parents value the approachable and supportive relationships that leaders and staff have established. Leaders engage thoughtfully with families and work collaboratively with external agencies and community partners to improve opportunities for pupils.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They understand the school's priorities and provide appropriate support and challenge. Together, leaders and governors

share a commitment to ensuring that every pupil receives the support, experiences and education needed to thrive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders want pupils to leave Birklands with academic success and much more. Their aim is for pupils to develop confidence, ambition and the belief that they can achieve their goals, regardless of their background or circumstances. Staff encourage pupils to aim high and help them see a wide range of possibilities for their future. Pupils value the opportunities available to them and speak confidently about their ambitions. As a result, they leave Birklands as thoughtful, well-rounded young people who are ready for the next stage of education and eager to embrace future opportunities.

Pupils benefit from a carefully planned personal development programme which broadens their horizons. Leaders make sure that pupils experience activities, visits and opportunities that many might not otherwise encounter. They place great importance on raising aspirations and helping pupils to understand the opportunities available to them beyond their local community. Leaders ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the school's wider offer. They deliberately create opportunities for pupils to encounter new ideas, experiences and perspectives. This helps pupils develop curiosity and confidence. Leadership roles and responsibilities help pupils develop independence while making a positive contribution to school life.

The school's values shape daily life. Through lessons, assemblies and wider experiences, pupils develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally. They learn the importance of kindness, respect and responsibility. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, equality and diversity in ways that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They also learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline. Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Staff know pupils well and provide effective support when pupils need help. As a result, pupils feel valued, listened to and cared for.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

A determination to provide pupils with the very best education sits behind leaders' recent work on curriculum development. They have strengthened curriculum content and sequencing so that pupils build knowledge and skills in a logical order from the early years to Year 6. The curriculum reflects the school's high ambition for pupils and helps them develop both academically and personally.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' reading, phonics and writing so that they develop the knowledge and skills they need to access learning across the curriculum. Staff identify pupils who need additional support quickly and adapt learning so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils can learn alongside their peers.

Teachers present new learning clearly and create positive classroom environments where pupils engage well with their learning. Professional development, coaching and collaboration across the trust have strengthened staff expertise and result in consistency in teaching. Pupils value their lessons and understand what they are learning.

Leaders recognise that some recent improvement work has not yet resulted in consistency across all subjects and classes. At times, teachers do not check what pupils know and remember about their learning. This means that there are occasions when teachers do not make precise adaptations or address gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders are addressing this inconsistency to ensure that pupils build and apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have strengthened the early years curriculum so that it focuses clearly on the knowledge and skills that children need to develop over time. Staff understand children's starting points and use this information to plan learning that builds progressively. A particular emphasis on communication and language, early reading and mathematics helps children develop the foundations needed for future learning. Positive relationships with children and families help staff to identify any learning or wellbeing needs early. They support children to feel safe, confident and ready to learn.

Staff know children well and accurately identify any additional needs. They work closely with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure that children receive the support they need. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities access learning successfully alongside their peers. Children engage positively in learning and develop independence. Staff use questioning, interactions and carefully chosen activities to support learning and development. Children achieve well from their starting points and move into Year 1 ready for the next stage of their learning.

Leaders continue to refine provision across the early years. The indoor environment supports learning effectively and helps children to develop secure knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Leaders have plans to enhance the outdoor provision so that it provides equally rich learning opportunities. Their ambition is to further strengthen children's experiences and improve consistency across the setting.

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

Pupils describe Birklands as a place where they feel known, valued and supported. Staff take time to understand pupils as individuals and build positive relationships with them and their families. This helps pupils feel that they belong and gives them the confidence to take part fully in school life.

Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their achievements. They benefit from a curriculum that helps them develop secure knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Staff identify barriers to learning early and provide support that ensures pupils achieve well from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who

face other challenges receive the help they need to succeed alongside their peers. As they move through the school, pupils develop the confidence, resilience and independence needed for the next stage of their education.

Pupils value the many opportunities that enrich their education beyond the classroom. They take part in visits, leadership roles, clubs and wider experiences that help them to discover new interests and talents. These opportunities encourage pupils to think beyond their immediate surroundings, broaden their understanding of the world and raise their aspirations for the future. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their ambitions and the experiences that have helped to shape them.

Pupils behave well and contribute to the calm atmosphere across the school. They understand the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. Bullying is uncommon and staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively when they arise. Pupils trust staff to help them if they have worries. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including online, and understand the importance of healthy relationships.

Pupils recognise the importance of attending school regularly. Many pupils who have previously found attendance difficult now attend more consistently because of the support they and their families receive. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils benefit fully from everything that Birklands offers and thrive both academically and personally.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the quality of teaching across the curriculum by ensuring that teachers consistently make effective decisions about what, when and how to teach, and adapt learning precisely to meet the needs of pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that the outdoor provision in the early years is of the same high quality as the indoor provision, enabling children to develop and learn equally well in both environments.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the NOVA Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ashfaq Rahman OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Monckton.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and carers, staff, senior leaders, local governors, members of the executive team and trustees during the inspection.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection of a serious incident involving a child who used to attend this school that had occurred since the previous inspection. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' evaluations.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for 6 pupils in a specially resourced provision.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection.

Amy Watson: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Nyree Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sally Wicken, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Clark, 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 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

326

Close to 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

315

Close to 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)

33.22%

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

1.53%

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

7.36%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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.

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	67%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

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	76%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	63%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	58%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

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)	58%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	58%	Above

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	72%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	59%	Above

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	63%	68%	-4 pp
2024/25 (final)	58%	69%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	67%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	80%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	75%	77%	-2 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	72%	80%	-8 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	77%	79%	-2 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	79%	-4 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)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	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)	14.3%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	21.8%	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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