

Harlesden Primary School

Address: Acton Lane, London, NW10 8UT

Unique reference number (URN): 101499

Inspection report: 9 June 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well. The school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in phonics, writing and number facts. Pupils leave the school with the knowledge and skills that they need for their next stage of education. This is reflected in the published outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics, where pupils typically achieve in line with national expectations. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils, whose outcomes are similar to, and in some subjects better than, those of disadvantaged pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make sufficient progress from their starting points.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils produce work of an appropriate standard and develop suitable knowledge. As pupils progress through the school, they talk with growing confidence about their learning and apply their basic skills with greater accuracy.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum in place. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire and demonstrate are clearly identified. This is particularly evident in the teaching of mathematics, which is well sequenced across the school. The curriculum is typically implemented in line with leaders' expectations. Teachers have high expectations and mostly explain new learning clearly. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils acquire the knowledge they need to be successful. However, this is more consistent and effective in key stage 2 than for younger pupils.

There are school-wide approaches in place to track pupils' learning. However, at times, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are inconsistent. Sometimes, pupils' misconceptions are not identified and corrected. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. The strategies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities broadly support their needs. Although, at times, adaptations are not as precise as they could be.

Pupils increase their ability to read more confidently through the consistent approach to teaching early reading and phonics. Pupils' writing skills improve over time. They develop more appropriate handwriting and spelling skills as they progress through the school.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders place great emphasis on being inclusive, which is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders identify pupils' needs effectively and swiftly. They utilise the expertise of the local authority and a broad range of external agencies to reduce barriers for pupils. Staff receive regular training, are typically deployed appropriately and provide broad support. Leaders track pupils' progress and are skilful in selecting the right support to help pupils and to meet their needs.

Leaders prioritise additional support and resources to overcome any barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing. Leaders ensure that information about how best to support pupils

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in place. However, staff's use of this information is, on occasion, not as effective as it could be. Pupils with SEND broadly receive the support they need for their learning, but when information is not used effectively pupils' needs are not as precisely met.

The school uses additional funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils, those known to social care and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders have been successful in implementing several strategies which have improved pupils' outcomes and consistently secured better attendance.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the key priorities for improvement. The school works effectively with other schools and external organisations to develop its provision and pastoral support. Recently, leaders' actions to address weaknesses have gathered pace and are showing positive signs of impact, such as the improvements seen in pupils' attendance. Leaders are aware that the focus on ensuring consistently high-quality teaching across all subjects, and in the early years, is not sharp enough and that their actions need to be more precise to bring about further improvement. Leaders have begun work to address this and utilise other experts, such as the local authority, to audit the current provision and support improvement.

The governing body ensures that statutory requirements, such as safeguarding, are met. More recently, the governing body holds the school to account with greater rigour and provides effective support and challenge to leaders to drive further improvement.

Staff appreciate how leaders consider their workload and wellbeing. Leaders make sure additional support and resources, where appropriate and requested, are in place. Leaders ensure that wellbeing opportunities are available for all. Time for professional learning and developing staff expertise is prioritised. Staff receive appropriate training to strengthen their practice and further develop in their career. For example, a number of staff participate in formal leadership qualifications.

The school works in partnership with parents and carers. Typically, parents are positive and interact well with the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal, social, health, and economic education is well structured. It incorporates a suitable relationships curriculum. Leaders ensure that topics are revisited and built upon as pupils progress through the school. Adaptations are made to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. Pupils are taught how to be safe, including when online. Pupils have secure knowledge about important topics such as phishing, fraud and hacking. They benefit from carefully selected workshops that focus on pertinent issues, such as bullying and knife crime. Pupils understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They know about harmful substances, including tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Older pupils confidently talk about the importance of the fundamental British values, such as democracy. The school promotes cultural awareness and diversity. Pupils understand difference and that everyone has the right to be treated equally. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school's approach to developing pupils' character includes opportunities for leadership roles. For example, as a pupil leader or a member of the school council. Leaders have rightly identified that pupils would benefit from more opportunities to develop their leadership skills and have plans to address this. Pupils are enthusiastic about the well-considered trips and visitors. For instance, drama workshops and music practitioners enhance pupils' experiences and academic learning. The extra-curricular activities, which include kayaking, orienteering and taekwondo, are popular among the pupils. Leaders have effective systems to track pupils' participation and ensure all pupils benefit from what is on offer. Leaders ensure the provision is inclusive and make adjustments where needed so that pupils can take part.

Staff know pupils well. Pupils and children in the early years are cared for, supported and nurtured. School-wide approaches and strategies successfully reduce pupils' barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Many pupils attend school regularly. However, over time, pupils' attendance is below that of their peers nationally, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are a number of pupils who are persistently absent. Following a period of limited resources, leaders are beginning to address the issues and overcome barriers to pupils attending school. Leaders' actions are appropriate, but these measures are at an early stage. It is too early to see the full impact of this work and whether early signs of improvement are sustained.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils in and around the school. Pupils are typically kind, supportive and tolerant of each other. Social times are well structured. Pupils know and understand the well-embedded rules. Pupils are focused and make positive contributions to their lessons, particularly when teachers sustain their interest. Pupils have a clear understanding of different types of bullying and discrimination. There are different ways for pupils to report any concerns and staff tackle issues quickly.

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years provision. Leaders recognise that children arrive with different starting points and have tailored the provision to meet children's needs. Following a period of recent instability in leadership and staffing, leaders have identified priorities and begun work to address these, for example by placing a sharper focus on opportunities to develop children's language and communication through songs, rhymes and stories. However, this is at an early stage, and there is more work to do. The early years curriculum is ambitious, but it is not implemented as well as it could be. Some activities lack precision and are not closely matched to the learning intention. Staff do not routinely check and address children's knowledge and skills. At times, staff do not use opportunities to guide children to extend their choice of activities or

develop their vocabulary. Despite these shortcomings, typically, children acquire the necessary basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are prepared adequately for going into Year 1.

Children are safe, and most enjoy coming to school. They know and typically follow the rules and routines. Children learn to take turns and cooperate well with each other.

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

Pupils are happy at Harlesden Primary School. The school is a welcoming and friendly environment, where pupils are nurtured and supported. Pupils and staff have positive relationships. Staff know the pupils very well. Pupils appreciate the help, guidance and support that they receive. Pupils benefit from effective pastoral provision that supports their wellbeing. Any additional support reduces pupils' barriers effectively.

Many pupils attend school regularly, and some say 'here every day, ready on time and every minute matters', highlighting the importance of being at school. While this is the case, overall attendance for pupils remains below the national average. Leaders' recent drive to improve this is bringing about early signs of improvement, but it remains an area of focus.

Children in the early years receive mixed experiences. Children are safe and cooperate well with one another. They know and follow the well-established rules and routines. Children typically enjoy the activities available and develop their curiosity. However, the learning experiences provided by staff are inconsistent and do not maximise learning opportunities.

Pupils' behaviour is positive. Older pupils demonstrate mature attitudes to their learning. Pupils enjoy participating and contributing to their learning. In lessons where learning is effectively structured, they are eager to learn. Over time, pupils typically acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be equipped for the next stage of their learning. Bullying is rare, and the school does not tolerate this. Pupils are safe and confident to report concerns to staff. Any issues are addressed and dealt with appropriately.

Pupils benefit from an effectively crafted personal development programme. Pupils appreciate, and are enthusiastic about, the opportunities to visit a wide range of places such as museums, faith and artistic institutions, and important landmarks in London. These opportunities develop their understanding of the world around them and prepare them for living and working in a diverse community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to build on recent action to improve pupils' attendance, so that current gains are sustained for all pupils, and especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders should ensure the implementation of the early years curriculum is in line with their expectations so that staff maximise learning opportunities with activities that are

precisely matched to learning intentions, and staff routinely promote and extend children's learning and vocabulary.

- Leaders should further develop and strengthen their strategic oversight of the quality of teaching and learning, so that all pupils, including children in the early years, consistently benefit from high-quality teaching that includes effective adaptations to meet pupils' needs, and routinely checks pupils' understanding and addresses misconceptions.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Narinder Nathan.

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, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sarah Wawn

Lead inspector:

Ray Lau, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Daniel Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Rutinderjit Mahil-Pooni, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

297

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

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)

52.13%

Well 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

7.41%

Well 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

11.11%

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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

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	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	41%	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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	58%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	41%	58%	Below

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	77%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	73%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	69%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	66%	-25 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%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	80%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	78%	-6 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	58%	78%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	74%	78%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	77%	-36 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	77%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	73%	81%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	84%	79%	5 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	79%	-6 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)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.1%	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)	20.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	27.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.5%	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.

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