

Norland CE School

Address: Berry Moor Road, Norland, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX6 3RN

Unique reference number (URN): 107537

Inspection report: 2 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders place a high priority on attendance. They analyse attendance closely, at whole-school level and for different groups. This helps them to identify patterns and the causes of any absence. Leaders act early to remove any barriers to attendance. Overall attendance is above the national average. There are improving trends for pupils who are persistently absent, including where families face difficult circumstances. Leaders know their families well. They build strong relationships and communicate regularly, drawing on home visits, the support of external agencies and the breakfast club. Where attendance dips, leaders act swiftly, and their support secures clear improvement for individual pupils and groups.

Pupils behave very well in classrooms and around the school. Leaders and staff have established a calm, orderly and respectful environment, built on warm relationships. Staff greet pupils by name and act as positive role models. They teach pupils how to manage their emotions and resolve conflict, through the curriculum and through individual support. Older pupils set a positive example for younger ones, living up to the school's high expectations. Pupils show self-discipline and rarely need reminding about how to behave. They arrive punctually, settle quickly and show positive attitudes to their learning. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively. The school uses suspension rarely and appropriately, with careful support to help pupils to return to school successfully.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils typically achieve well. Outcomes in national tests are broadly in line with national averages over time. Their books, and what they say about their learning, show that pupils make secure progress from their starting points across the curriculum.

Pupils develop the foundations they need. Most are fluent, at the level expected for their age, in number, spelling and handwriting. Where pupils have gaps, these close because they practise and consolidate their learning. Through the school's early reading programme, staff check pupils' reading closely. Pupils develop independent strategies as early readers and grow in confidence. By the end of their time at the school, they read fluently and with understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make suitable progress from their starting points. Staff skilfully support pupils with significant speech and language needs to strengthen their communication. Disadvantaged pupils make appropriate progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils are confident and articulate. They are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum. They draw on lesson visits, work in books and regular assessment to evaluate it. The curriculum is well planned, with clear end points. It is sequenced carefully and builds on what pupils have learned before. Leaders make deliberate choices to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain new concepts clearly. They routinely return pupils to earlier learning to secure it in their memory.

Reading is prioritised. Early reading is consistently well taught through daily phonics sessions. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know, and pupils use their blending skills well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils who fall behind, or who have not secured the foundations of reading, handwriting or mathematics, receive short, focused support each day. This helps them to keep up and to close gaps quickly. The school's commitment to pupils securing the foundations of writing is evident in daily handwriting lessons.

The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they have access to the same ambitious content as their peers.

Some teaching across the school is of a very high standard, and leaders are working to ensure that this standard is consistently embedded across all subjects and year groups.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for giving children the best start. The curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge, vocabulary and skills that children will learn. Leaders place language and communication, and children's personal, social and emotional development, at the heart of their work.

Adults engage children in meaningful conversations that develop their language. They share songs, rhymes and stories, reading and re-reading high-quality texts to deepen children's understanding. Children become secure in early reading through daily phonics. In mathematics, they count, and describe pattern, quantity and shape, applying what they learn in their play. For example, when children share conkers between two animals.

Adults plan play-based activities carefully around children's interests and the knowledge children need. They identify gaps quickly and support children to address them. Children show independence and choose activities purposefully, for example by carefully practising writing their names on a chalk-board.

Staff make sure that children feel safe, secure and happy from the start of the day. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the end of Reception, they use their knowledge of phonics to read with increasing fluency. Some interactions between adults and children are of high quality, although this is not yet consistent across the provision.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs and any barriers to learning quickly and accurately. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known to children's social care. The school involves parents and carers from the start and works closely with the local authority and external specialists to meet pupils' needs.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils. They receive training to support them in understanding and meeting pupils' particular needs. Adaptations enable pupils to engage with their learning. For example, pupils benefit from precise questioning and physical aids such as pencil-grips or coloured overlays.

The school is committed to meeting all pupils' individual needs. This includes providing a bespoke, nurturing space with high-quality adult support. Wherever possible, pupils with complex needs learn and play alongside their peers. Pupils' books show well-considered adaptations. Pupils with SEND work towards the same curriculum goals as their peers, with well-considered adjustments where necessary, such as simplified instructions.

Leaders prioritise disadvantaged pupils in discussions about progress. Leaders track the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium fund, carefully. The funding is targeted to improve pupils' progress, attendance and engagement.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They know pupils and families well, and they have a clear rationale for their decisions, such as how they plan progression for mixed-age classes. Leaders are clear about which pupils are vulnerable and the barriers they face, and they act in these pupils' best interests. Parents and carers speak positively about the school and trust that their children are known and well prepared for the next stage.

Leaders identify the right priorities and act on them. They model high expectations and the professional standards they expect of others. Staff value this. They say that leaders are supportive and realistic about what they ask of them. Leaders focus staff training and professional development on improving the curriculum and pupils' outcomes. Leaders take deliberate action to protect staff wellbeing and to keep workload manageable. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and included.

Governors understand their duties and carry them out effectively. They use high-quality information to support and challenge leaders. They hold leaders to account for teaching, inclusion and outcomes, and they scrutinise how well funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent. Resources are aligned carefully to the school's priorities.

The school works closely with the diocese, within the federation and benefits from productive engagement with other, expert, external partners. Leaders draw on this support to keep improving.

The school has a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The relationships and sex education programme is age-appropriate and well taught. Parents and carers are consulted on it. Sensitive topics are handled thoughtfully, with appropriate adjustments for the school's mixed-age classes.

Pupils take on a range of meaningful leadership roles. They stand for election as house captains and members of the school council, presenting their ideas to their peers beforehand. Pupils serve on the eco committee and the worship committee, and they are proud to make a positive difference.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of the fundamental British values. They know that voting is a fair way to choose people for roles. Pupils understand that discrimination is wrong, and they value tolerance and mutual respect. Through learning about different religions, pupils develop their knowledge of the faiths represented in wider British society. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including online and near water. They learn about the changes their bodies go through as they grow up.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs, trips and visits that broaden their experiences and develop their talents. These include sport, the arts, choir and computing, alongside visits to museums, zoos and places of worship. Every pupil takes part in weekly outdoor learning which is highly motivating for many. All pupils perform in a school production, building their confidence. The school deliberately makes sure that pupils who would benefit most are able to take part in extra-curricular activities, and it consults pupils on which clubs to offer. Effective pastoral support, in school and through external services, meets pupils' needs. Pupils know how to seek help and trust that staff will support them.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this small Church of England school. They feel happy and valued. Pupils benefit from a calm, welcoming start to each day, including at the breakfast club where they can engage in creative and sporting activities. They build trusting relationships with the kind, caring adults around them. Pupils describe their school as a place where they grow and thrive together. Visitors are greeted with cheerful smiles by pupils who are happy to be at school.

Children in early years settle quickly and join in with enthusiasm. Reading sits at the heart of school life. Pupils and staff enjoy reading together. Pupils value their small classes and the individual attention these bring. They say that all the teachers are kind and that everyone learns and belongs together.

The school meets the needs of individual pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know pupils well and identify their needs quickly. They support these pupils thoughtfully so that they learn alongside their friends.

Respect is a value that pupils hold dear. They say that everyone is treated fairly. Pupils behave well and follow the school's routines. They are polite and courteous to one another,

to staff and to visitors. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with it quickly should it happen. The school feels calm and orderly, and pupils say that they feel safe.

Pupils take pride in their work. Their books show that they make secure progress from their starting points. Pupils attend well and arrive punctually. They take on meaningful leadership roles and help to shape school decisions. They enjoy a wide range of clubs, trips and weekly outdoor learning opportunities. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across subjects and year groups.
 - Leaders should further develop staff's expertise so that interactions with children in the early years are consistently effective.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is James Franklin-Smith.

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 HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the head of school and head of the other federation school, as well as several other leaders, including those responsible for the school's curriculum, early years, and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the governing body and met with a range of staff. Inspectors carried out learning walks across the school in a range of subjects and reviewed pupils' work. They met with groups of pupils and observed social times. Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including those related to the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and governance.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is part of a federation called The Calderdale Village Schools Federation.

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in November 2025.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Head of School: Abbie Booth

Lead inspector:

Dughall McCormick, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Stephanie Ngenda, 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

63

Well 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

105

Well 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)

17.46%

Below 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

1.59%

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

25.40%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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	68%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	80%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	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	78%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	90%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
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	85%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	72%	Above
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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	100%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	14%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

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

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	14%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	29%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	14%	68%	-53 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	14%	80%	-65 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	29%	80%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

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

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.9%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.0%	5.9%	Below

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)	8.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	16.2%	Below

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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