

Lemington Riverside Primary School

Address: Rokeby Street, Lemington, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 8RR

Unique reference number (URN): 108456

Inspection report: 23 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders are relentless in their work on inclusion. The high proportion of pupils facing barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported effectively. The profile of pupils' needs is wide ranging and every pupil is made to feel as though they belong.

Leaders swiftly identify the potential barriers pupils face, including drawing on the expertise of other professionals when needed. This work begins during robust transition arrangements into the early years. Leaders are systematic in their approach to reviewing the support pupils receive. They make timely adjustments when needed, in close consultation with parents and carers. Parents are full of praise for the ways staff support their children.

Pupils with SEND are skilfully supported by well-trained staff. For example, some pupils follow a personalised curriculum in 'The Bridge', which meets their needs consistently well. Targeted interventions are successful. For example, they help pupils to improve their speech and communication and support some pupils to manage their emotions.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including looked after children and those known to social care, are supported well. Leaders work in effective partnerships with the local authority, know the barriers disadvantaged pupils face and target additional funding successfully. For example, targeted work to improve pupils' attendance is having a positive impact and additional teaching is improving pupils' accuracy in basic skills.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Despite a dip in attainment in 2025, by the end of key stage 2, pupils generally achieve outcomes close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and have done consistently over time. Leaders have acted decisively to ensure pupils receive additional support to secure their basic skills. For example, daily interventions and small group teaching are quickly closing the knowledge gaps that some pupils have. In recent years, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the school has increased significantly. Typically, these pupils make appropriate progress, relative to their starting points.

In lessons, pupils generally demonstrate a secure understanding of their learning, including their learning over time. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge accurately and pupils' written work demonstrates clear progress. Leaders recognise there is some further work to do to ensure consistency in the quality and accuracy of pupils' handwriting and spelling.

Staff prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning effectively.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise attendance. They track attendance closely and identify trends quickly. They act quickly to put in place any support that is needed. They work closely with other professionals, including the local authority, if they have concerns. Pupils' attendance is incentivised and rewarded. Although attendance is not at the national average overall, leaders' actions have ensured a steady improvement over time. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is close to the national average. Rates of persistent absence are steadily decreasing.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the school rules and conduct themselves well. They follow routines and instructions. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. Bullying and unkindness are rare and not tolerated. Pupils value the friendships they make and socialise well. Pupils enjoy talking to teachers and are confident speaking to visitors. They are keen to talk about their positive experiences at school and proactively greet adults warmly when they pass them. Pupils are motivated by being rewarded for their efforts with 'Lemington pounds' which they can save and spend in the school shop. Pupils with SEND are supported to manage their emotions, if they need it. Teachers use a range of effective strategies and resources to sustain pupils' concentration in lessons.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure the school's ambitious curriculum is generally taught well. Teachers use their accurate subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and design appropriate activities that support pupils' learning.

Staff receive regular and effective training. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported successfully and that they learn effectively alongside their peers. Teachers use a range of strategies to support pupils with SEND. For example, some pupils benefit from targeted small group work, to ensure they have secured their knowledge. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to resources to support pupils' understanding. During lessons, teachers typically check pupils' understanding effectively and address misconceptions appropriately, although occasionally gaps are not addressed as quickly as they could be. Leaders know the processes for checking understanding in some aspects of the wider curriculum need refining.

Leaders prioritise pupils' foundational knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics and communication. Phonics is taught well. The reading curriculum is designed effectively to develop pupils' reading fluency and accuracy. Pupils who need support with reading receive extra help so they can catch up. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum to support pupils' handwriting and spelling which is increasing the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing. Strategies to develop pupils' speaking skills are generally used effectively.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years experience a positive start to their education. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is clearly designed so that children develop their

knowledge and skills across all areas of learning over time. Staff are nurturing and provide high levels of care.

Leaders prioritise children's communication and language development. The quality of interactions between adults and children are generally effective. The curriculum focuses on securing children's basic skills. Phonics is taught well. Skilled staff help children to develop their understanding of early mathematics. Children's achievement has improved significantly in recent years. Children make sustained progress, often from low starting points, in readiness for Year 1. Effective transition arrangements mean that Year 1 staff know any gaps that children have in their learning.

Staff design outdoor learning and continuous provision effectively. For example, daily outdoor learning helps children to understand the natural world. Seasonal walks around the community help to develop children's environmental awareness. 'Bug hotels' promote scientific enquiry. Resources such as bikes, ropes and the see-saw support children's physical development well.

Leaders are quick to identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities when they start. They work closely with parents and carers and swiftly ensure that children get the support they need. They make careful adjustments to the environment and tailor teaching to meet children's needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school is well led. In recent years, leaders have developed a distinct and positive culture for inclusion. They are ambitious for pupils, advocate for them when necessary and provide effective pastoral support and care. They are determined that no child is left behind. This has shaped school priorities and informed an often bespoke approach to staff training and professional learning. For example, work with other professionals has developed staff expertise in supporting pupils' speech and language needs. Leaders actively engage with other schools to share practice and offer support. Parents, carers and the local authority are full of praise for the leaders' work in relation to inclusion and the support they offer.

Leaders know where improvements are needed and have taken appropriate action. For example, following a dip in attainment in key stage 2 outcomes in 2025, leaders have appointed additional teaching staff to provide tailored support for some pupils and increased leadership capacity. This is helping to improve pupils' achievement. Detailed knowledge of families and effective work with other professionals is improving attendance.

Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They know the school well and are fully informed and involved in school life. They provide appropriate levels of challenge and support and fulfil their duties well.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel rewarded in the work they do. Staff value how leaders prioritise workload. They appreciate the range of ways they are supported with their wellbeing.

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing is prioritised. In light of the high proportion of pupils who face barriers to learning and/or their wellbeing, leaders have designed an ambitious, inclusive programme that effectively meets pupils' needs. Leaders have adopted an appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that is adjusted to ensure that pupils learn in detail about aspects that are relevant to them and their community. For example, pupils learn about the consequences of anti-social behaviour in the community. Pupils learn about healthy, respectful relationships. From early years onwards, children and pupils learn about consent in an age-appropriate way.

The depth of pupils' knowledge of the PSHE curriculum is more secure in some areas, than in others. For example, pupils have detailed knowledge of how to stay safe online, while the depth of understanding some British values, such as individual liberty, is more mixed. Pupils are proud to be part of a school that celebrates diversity. Everyone is treated equally at the school and difference is embraced. Pupils learn about different cultures, traditions and characteristics that are protected by law through the carefully chosen books they read with teachers.

Pupils appreciate the value of volunteering. They enjoy contributing to their school community in roles such as sports leaders, prefects, dinner hall monitors and school councillors. These roles help pupils to understand citizenship and supports their sense of belonging. A range of wider opportunities, such as visits to museums and the theatre support pupils' learning and cultural appreciation. A range of inclusive clubs, for example in sport, choir and Mandarin nurture pupils' talents and encourage them to try new things. At the time of inspection, pupils were excited to be rehearsing their production of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Leaders ensure pupils have access to appropriate mental health and wellbeing support. For example, staff are trained in supporting pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have access to counselling services and other professionals.

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

Pupils at Lemington Riverside develop a sense of community and belonging. Pupils know that the school value, '#WeAreLemington', means everyone is treated equally, fairly and with respect. Pupils live this out. They appreciate the friendships they make and are respectful to each other and their teachers. For example, pupils play cooperatively at social times and know how to compromise. They hold doors open for their teachers and talk happily to them about their day.

Leaders have developed a positive culture for inclusion that begins in the early years. The high proportion of pupils who attend the school who face barriers to their leaning and/or wellbeing are supported effectively. Staff know pupils well. They provide tailored support to help them feel settled, supported and safe. 'The Bridge' is an effective provision for some pupils who follow a personalised curriculum. Generally, pupils are taught well. In lessons, teachers provide additional resources that help pupils to manage their emotions and sustain

their concentration. Typically, pupils achieve well, make secure progress and are prepared well for their next steps.

Staff ensure that pupils are offered a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. For example, residential trips that focus on outdoor learning support pupils' social skills, problem solving and teamwork. Leaders explore ways to remove financial barriers to overseas trips so that all pupils can attend. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world, become increasingly independent and experience international travel. Children in the early years enjoy visits to the zoo, where they learn about exotic animals. Trips to local supermarkets introduce children to the value of money and healthy choices.

Parents and carers are positive about their children's experiences at school. Leaders know families well and often go to great lengths to provide support. This is helping to improve attendance.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed recent developments in teaching and the curriculum so that pupils are supported consistently to secure their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well across all phases.
 - Leaders should ensure that assessment in the wider curriculum is consistent and used effectively to support pupils' progress.
 - Leaders should develop their approaches to further improve rates of attendance.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Barbara Moorhead.

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 the headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke to representatives from the local authority, members of the board of governors and staff and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery provision.

Headteacher: Craig Heeley

Lead inspector:

Dan McKeating, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Andy Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Gary Scott-Cummings, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

207

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

210

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)

68.62%

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

7.73%

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

42.51%

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 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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	52%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	69%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	65%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	53%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	36%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	54%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	68%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	91%	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	68%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	91%	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	61%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	59%	Close to average
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	53%	68%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	36%	69%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	67%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	66%	6 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	68%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	80%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	91%	78%	13 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	68%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	78%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	91%	77%	14 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	61%	80%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	43%	81%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	79%	-10 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	7.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	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)	24.7%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	22.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	37.2%	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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