

Whitley Lodge First School

Address: Woodburn Drive, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE26 3HW

Unique reference number (URN): 108600

Inspection report: 12 May 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 

Pupils achieve consistently well across the school. Any gaps that pupils have in their knowledge are quickly addressed by teachers to ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage in their education. Achievement in national tests is typically above national averages and improving over time. Pupils quickly develop the foundations they need in reading, writing and number to be successful. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

In other subjects, such as science and art, pupils, including in key stage 1 and early years, communicate their learning using subject-specific language and do so with confidence. For example, in religious education, Year 4 pupils are able to clearly articulate the concept of sacrifice and how it applies to their own lives. Pupils develop a secure knowledge base and produce high-quality work across the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend school very well. Attendance for all pupil groups is above national averages. Leaders continuously promote the importance of high attendance with pupils and their families. Children enjoy coming to school, and their parents know they are happy and safe. Leaders track and analyse attendance and take a supportive approach when attendance needs to improve. On the rare occasion that pupils' attendance falls below leaders' expectations, leaders swiftly and tenaciously provide the help that is required to remove any barriers to pupils attending well.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm and courteous. Pupils are enabled to thrive because there are no incidents that disrupt their learning. They play harmoniously together at playtime and have meaningful conversations to resolve rare conflicts that arise. Leaders and staff have very high expectations of how pupils conduct themselves in school. Pupils understand the meaning of bullying. They assert that it does not happen in their school but that if it did, it would not be tolerated. Warm relationships between staff and pupils underpin the school's deeply respectful culture.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that prioritises embedding the essential foundations that pupils need to learn well across a broad range of subjects. There are many well-planned opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop and apply their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

The curriculum offer is highly aspirational and extends beyond the academic, inspiring pupils to be active, engaged and creative learners. Leaders ensure that the curriculum promotes pupils' understanding and accurate use of technical vocabulary. It enables pupils to progressively build on secure knowledge and deepen their learning over time.

The curriculum is consistently and effectively well taught. Teachers use assessment skilfully within lessons to identify and address pupils' misconceptions in the moment. Teachers support pupils to understand and learn from their mistakes. Leaders ensure that high-quality teaching of phonics closely follows the school's chosen scheme so that pupils achieve reading fluency at an early stage. Barriers to pupils' learning are routinely identified and removed so that all pupils can fully access the broad and inclusive curriculum.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed a highly effective curriculum for the early years. It is carefully adapted for Nursery- and Reception-age children so that they build on knowledge and skills over time and are well prepared for Year 1.

Children settle quickly into class when they arrive. They benefit from a well-thought-out transition into school and a warm welcome from staff. Leaders have ensured that partnerships with parents are positive and well established.

Positive relationships are evident between staff and children. Adults ensure that they use every opportunity to extend and develop pupils' vocabulary and knowledge through high-quality interactions. Staff consistently model language well, ensuring that children's communication and language develop quickly.

Children in the early years behave extremely well. They are happy to be in school. They know their routines, and staff have high expectations of them. Phonics and early number are prioritised. Staff creatively use the school's outdoor spaces to develop children's core strength for writing. From their starting points, children make rapid progress. This includes children with special educational needs and or disabilities and children who may face other barriers to learning. They secure the knowledge they need to be successful in early reading, writing and mathematics.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Their work around inclusion begins with the carefully thought out transition into the school for all children. They ensure that they have a detailed understanding of pupils who may face barriers to learning or wellbeing and can identify which pupils need support at an early stage. Leaders ensure that they follow advice from external agencies so that they can tailor the support for each pupil.

Leaders closely monitor provision for each pupil to ensure that barriers to learning and wellbeing are consistently removed. They carefully consider the adaptations that pupils may need in the classroom and to their curriculum. Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of provision and make timely adjustments where necessary.

Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are supported to attend and achieve well. The school's use of additional funding precisely reflects pupils' needs, helping to close

gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers and ensuring equal access to the wider curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. Leaders act consistently in the best interests of pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils, parents and staff speak positively about the impact of the school's leadership. Parents unanimously praise the school, expressing high levels of appreciation for the role the school plays in the local community and the meaningful opportunities they have to participate in school life.

Governors have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities and fulfil these effectively. They know the school well and draw on their wide range of expertise to provide leaders with appropriate support and challenge. This ensures that leaders continue to drive improvements in line with their vision for the school. Governors ensure that they regularly monitor the impact of leaders' actions. They have a strong knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities.

Leaders are determined and proactive in their actions to continually improve the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need to develop their teaching practice. They provide a wide range of opportunities for staff to gain further skills and experience relevant to their roles. Staff feel valued, listened to and well supported by leaders. They also appreciate the careful consideration given to their workload and wellbeing,

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school provides an extensive programme of personal development, including personal, health, social and citizenship education and relationships education. Leaders tailor this programme to the school's local context, drawing on the resources available locally. For example, pupils benefit from calm and reflective moments on trips to the beach.

There is a rich programme of wider opportunities available to pupils. Pupils benefit from engaging in an extensive range of activities that develop their talents and interests and broaden their horizons. This includes clubs like music clubs and a variety of sports. There are opportunities for pupils to perform on stage at a local theatre. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are able to participate fully in all the school has to offer. The positive impact of the programme is evident in the way that pupils attend well and interact with one another, and in their positive attitudes to school.

Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the risks they may face both online and offline. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum promotes staying safe in the school's locality. This is reinforced by visiting speakers. For example, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution teaches pupils how to stay safe at the seaside.

Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are tolerant and respectful of difference and feel strongly that everyone is welcome at their school. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and the meaning of consent. They gain

an appreciation of fundamental British values. For example, democracy is explored through the process of electing the school council.

Younger pupils benefit from a buddy system when they start school. This provides older pupils with a leadership opportunity. Other leadership roles enable pupils to develop confidence, independence and maturity. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Leaders ensure that they seek the right support for pupils who need help with their wellbeing.

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

Pupils' happiness, wellbeing and high academic achievement are at the heart of this community school. Pupils feel cared for and well looked after by all staff. As a result, they feel safe and are able to thrive in school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported to participate fully in school life.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They consistently behave with integrity in lessons and during playtimes. In all year groups, pupils are well mannered and caring. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen in their school. If it did, they know they would speak to staff, who will help them. Pupils typically resolve disagreements through discussion, a skill they have learned in lessons.

Pupils rise to the staff's very high expectations. They abide by the school's values and take pride in their work and achievements, for example when they receive a 'wonder point' in celebration of their character or hard work.

In the early years, children get off to a very positive start. They develop the foundations in reading, writing and number to be successful in later learning. Older pupils further develop their skills such as mathematical fluency and spelling. Pupils are taught to read well and quickly progress to reading more challenging texts. Those who have gaps in their phonics knowledge are supported to catch up quickly. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or those with SEND, make positive progress from their starting points. This is reflected in the high standards in pupils' work across the curriculum.

The curriculum engages pupils and inspires them to be creative. Pupils value and enjoy the opportunities that they get at school. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, are motivated to attend well. Pupils are enthusiastic about the broad range of experiences that school provides. They say these experiences help them to remember their learning.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine and embed their identified priorities for improvement in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Bryan Stewart.

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 senior leaders, the chair of governors, local authority representative and school improvement partner during the inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jennifer Palmer

Lead inspector:

Amy Blackburn, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Andy Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Jo Heaton, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

259

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

230

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)

8.45%

Well 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

1.54%

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

3.47%

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 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).

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)	2.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	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)	0.6%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.0%	14.6%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	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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