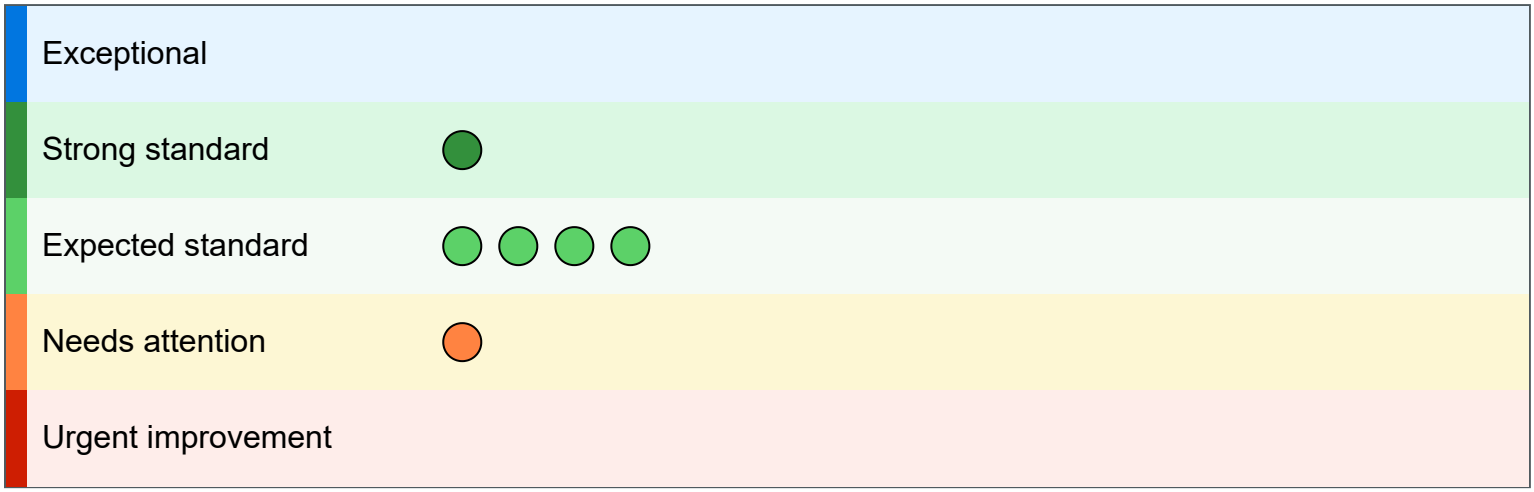
Hebburn Comprehensive School

Address: Campbell Park Road, NE31 2QU

Unique reference number (URN): 108731

Inspection report: 9 December 2025



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

Personal development and well-being

Strong standard

The school provides pupils with varied and meaningful opportunities for personal development. The taught curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is very effective in helping pupils to understand more about themselves and others. As pupils get older, they debate and discuss increasingly complex ethical issues. Pupils value these opportunities and develop respect for differing beliefs and opinions. Diversity is regularly celebrated at the school in meaningful ways. Celebrations are often pupil-led, giving pupils the chance to develop organisational and leadership skills. The school engages well with the local community. Pupils develop an understanding of how to be responsible, active citizens. The fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are woven through the curriculum and pupils know these very well.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of online risks, healthy relationships and how to make positive lifestyle choices. The school skilfully adapts its approach to personal development and relationships, sex and health education to meet pupils' needs. Vulnerable pupils get additional support to stay safe and make healthy choices. Pupils are increasingly confident and resilient. For example, older pupils know how to study effectively and manage exam stress. If pupils struggle with their wellbeing, the school offers personalised pastoral care to get them back on track. Pupils and parents appreciate the nurturing approach the school takes to all of its pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included in all aspects of school life.

Careers education is a strength of the school. In lessons, pupils are signposted to careers of interest. Older pupils take part in work experience and get specific, helpful careers guidance. Visits to further education establishments inspire pupils. This offer is available to all. The school ensures pupils make informed and ambitious choices about their futures. In addition to the PSHE curriculum, the school runs projects to develop pupils financial understanding and prepare them very well for adulthood.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Increasingly, pupils achieve well during their time at this school. Pupils' attainment in national tests and examinations has increased recently. On the whole, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. In the past, the progress pupils made from their starting points was below average. Leaders have acted swiftly and effectively to ensure that pupils make more rapid and sustained progress. Pupils now typically progress through the curriculum well.

Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in national tests is above that of their disadvantaged peers nationally. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at the school is narrowing. Pupils have the important knowledge they need so that they are ready for their next stage of learning.

Sometimes, older pupils develop a deeper understanding of certain topics. This is because they have had the opportunity to explore them in greater depth. This is less often the case for younger pupils, who have fewer opportunities to explore certain topics in such detail so as to develop the depth of knowledge that they could across the curriculum. Leaders recognise there is more to do to ensure all pupils secure more complex knowledge and skills over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of where the school's curriculum and teaching is more effective and where it requires further refinement. Leaders' recent changes to the curriculum ensure that what pupils learn in each subject prepares them well for the next stage of their education. If pupils have gaps in their basic skills or knowledge, for example literacy or numeracy, the school addresses these quickly. Support to improve some pupils' handwriting is at an earlier stage of development.

Staff are knowledgeable about the content of the curriculum. Lessons are taught well and help pupils build on what they already know. Regular opportunities to revisit prior learning are embedded in the curriculum. Typically, staff check what pupils do and do not understand effectively before moving on in lessons. Often, staff adapt future learning effectively based on current gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. However, this is not consistent across the school. This means that sometimes tasks do not build successfully on what pupils know. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in lessons is generally appropriate and enables pupils to learn well. Staff understand and remove barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders are focused and determined on meeting the needs of all pupils and in particular the inclusion of disadvantaged pupils. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly and accurately identified. Staff receive useful information about how best to support pupils. This is typically used well to adapt lessons for pupils with SEND where appropriate. The information available to staff is regularly reviewed to ensure it is relevant and accurate.

Leaders have successfully created supportive initiatives within the school to further improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement and pastoral care. Staff who support these pupils are knowledgeable about their individual needs. The school's targeted work with disadvantaged pupils is effective. Leaders are focused and determined on meeting the needs of all pupils and in particular the inclusion of disadvantaged pupils. Where aspects of inclusion work are still being refined, leaders know what needs further development.

Staff receive ongoing training to help them understand the support disadvantaged pupils might require. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies to understand each pupil's individual needs. Leaders recognise the challenges specific to their school's context. They have used the pupil premium funding well to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement and personal wellbeing. Where alternative provision is used, it is in the best interests of pupils. The school regularly checks on pupils' progress in these settings. Pupils

who attend alternative provision are positive about the support they receive and how this enables them to learn and develop well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

School leaders act in pupils' best interests. School development priorities are appropriate and generally impactful. Leaders have brought about improvements to pupils' achievement and behaviour, but to a lesser degree, attendance. Those responsible for governance share leaders' ambitions for all pupils to thrive. They understand where the school is on its improvement journey. Governors support and challenge leaders effectively. The governing body undertakes its statutory duties well. It ensures that additional funds are directed appropriately to ensure disadvantaged pupils have equal access to enrichment opportunities.

Staff benefit from a well-considered professional learning programme. This approach is based on educational research and adapted to the school's context. Leaders have created a culture of professionalism and high expectations. This has raised standards and built a mutually supportive culture among staff. Leadership at all levels of the school continues to strengthen. Staff are extremely positive about working at the school. They say that wellbeing is a priority for leaders. Early career teachers get the support and guidance they need to make a positive start to their teaching career.

Leaders are fully committed to developing a cohesive school community. This includes actively engaging with parents and carers as changes are made. There are regular opportunities for parents to visit the school and take part in events and celebrations. Parents appreciate the support staff offer pupils. Leaders emphasise the importance of working hard, being kind and aspiring for your future. These values are reflected in leaders' commitment to seeing each pupil achieve their potential.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Too many pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Although pupils' attendance has improved recently, there is more work to do to secure high levels of attendance for all pupil groups, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have clear ambitions for pupils' attendance, but their approach has not brought about sustained improvement. It is too soon to determine the full impact of more recently introduced attendance strategies. Pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. They value the rewards to incentivise high attendance. Staff emphasise the importance of attending well. The school is tenacious in supporting pupils who are persistently absent and removing barriers to attending well. In some individual cases, this has led to improved attendance.

Leaders have established a calm and orderly learning environment at the school. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which are well understood by staff and pupils. Pupils

rise to these expectations and generally have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils collaborate well with their peers. If staff have to issue reminders about behaviour, pupils respond quickly and learning is rarely disrupted. Around the school, pupils are polite and respectful. Staff address issues of bullying swiftly and effectively. Such incidents are rare. Discriminatory language of any sort is not tolerated by staff or pupils. There is a welcoming culture at the school built on mutual respect and trust.

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

Pupils and staff share warm, positive relationships. Pupils value the support that staff offer them academically and pastorally. The school prioritises pupils' wellbeing so that they are ready to learn. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Pupils are proud of the diversity within their school community, and they are accepting of differences. Younger pupils quickly settle into routines and enjoy their learning. Bullying is rare and is dealt with well by staff should it occur.

Older pupils are proud of the achievements and accomplishments that they have made during their time at school. They say that the school has helped prepare them for their futures well. The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils' achievement has improved recently. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, who now achieve well.

Pupils understand the importance of being respectful and ready for learning. Classrooms are calm and pupils typically behave well. When this is not the case, the school takes effective action to help pupils improve their attitudes to learning. Pupils who have previously struggled to meet the school's expectations are now thriving. Staff know pupils well. Pastoral care is of a high quality. Pupils feel safe and reach out to adults if they need advice or guidance.

Pupils' attendance is beginning to improve. However, pupils are still absent too often. This impacts negatively on their achievement.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to enrich pupils' character education and cultural understanding. As well as extra-curricular clubs, school trips and pupil leadership roles, staff also promote pupils' independence. These events include diversity celebrations, enterprise activities and community engagement initiatives.

Next steps

• Leaders should continue to strengthen and implement their attendance strategy to rapidly improve attendance for all groups of pupils.
• Leaders should ensure that staff consistently set work that enables all pupils to develop secure, detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum, enabling them to achieve highly.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Garry Thompson.

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 headteacher, senior leaders and those responsible for governance during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of six alternative providers, including three that are unregistered.

Headteacher: David Thompson

Lead inspector:
John Linkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Andrew Gibbins, His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Spurr, Ofsted Inspector
Carl Sugden, 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 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

908
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: 1,067

School capacity

1,000
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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

49.34%
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: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.10%
Well 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: 3.09%

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support

18.06%
Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to 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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	43.9%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24	33.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23	40.0%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	44.1	45.9	Close to average
2023/24	40.8	45.9	Below
2022/23	44.4	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.35	-0.03	Below
2022/23	-0.35	-0.03	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	29.3%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24	24.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23	18.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	37.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24	36.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23	35.7	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.48	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23	-0.97	-0.57	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	29.3%	52.8%	-23.5 pp
2023/24	24.7%	53.1%	-28.4 pp
2022/23	18.2%	52.4%	-34.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	37.2	50.3	-13.1
2023/24	36.4	50.0	-13.6
2022/23	35.7	50.3	-14.6

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	-0.48	0.16	-0.64
2022/23	-0.97	0.17	-1.13

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers	85%	91%	Below
2022 leavers	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers	88%	94%	Below

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 (2 terms)	10.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23	9.3%	9.0%	Close to average

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 (2 terms)	30.2%	21.9%	Above
2023/24	29.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23	29.0%	26.5%	Close to average

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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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