

Fulwell Junior School

Address: Sea Road, Fulwell, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 9EE

Unique reference number (URN): 108763

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.

Exceptional ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional ●

Leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school is compelling. From the time they start at school, pupils' interests, talents and career aspirations are meticulously tracked. This means that each pupil receives opportunities to develop their skills. Wider enrichment is extensive and includes a wide range of performing arts, sport and musical opportunities. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from this offer, and they promote high participation among disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables all pupils to thrive.

Pupils feel exceptionally well supported and proud of the uniqueness of their school's wider provision. This significantly raises their aspirations. Pupils benefit from a transformative programme that includes relationships education and character education. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of respect. They talk confidently about fundamental British values. Pupils' understanding of healthy relationships and how to stay safe, both on and offline, is highly developed. They develop key skills that prepare them for later life through weekly opportunities to develop their communication, collaboration and critical thinking.

Leaders have developed an extensive careers curriculum which is noteworthy. They provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and interests linked to the world of work, through expertly established links with employers.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Leaders' rigorous tracking of pupils' wellbeing helps them to identify and address issues early. As a result, pupils demonstrate remarkable resilience and independence. Staff receive the training they need to support pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders' work over time has a profound impact on the outcomes and experiences of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND and others facing barriers. Pupils leave the school as morally driven, ambitious and confident members of the community.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils secure the knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics quickly. Pupils apply this knowledge to a high standard across their work. They explain their learning clearly across subjects, including in mathematics, where they articulate their reasoning with confidence. Outcomes in national tests reflect pupils' positive achievements. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge across the wider curriculum, and communicate confidently and articulately.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make positive progress from their starting points because of the adjustments and highly effective support they receive in class.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and have the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to succeed.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders place a high priority on attendance and have embedded a strong culture of regular attendance. They have rigorous monitoring systems in place so that they know when and where to direct support. Attendance is above average for all pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged. Persistent absence is low. Leaders take effective action to remove barriers to attendance through timely intervention for pupils and their families. As a result, attendance has strengthened.

Pupils enter school calmly and courteously. They settle quickly and show eagerness and positive attitudes to their learning. Routines and expectations are clear and embedded. The school's culture is highly conducive to learning. Pupils flourish within lessons because their learning is very rarely disrupted. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. At playtimes, pupils interact harmoniously. They engage well with the wide range of activities available to them. Pupils consistently demonstrate manners, self-discipline and respect for one another. Conflict and bullying are rare. Incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are adamant that discrimination is not tolerated. All pupils set an excellent example. Where pupils may need adjustments to behave consistently well, staff support them with adaptations to ensure this happens.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious and broad curriculum that inspires, engages and excites pupils. They understand the curriculum well and review its impact regularly to ensure that it evolves in line with pupils' needs and interests.

Leaders set high expectations for all pupils and ensure that every pupil accesses the curriculum alongside their peers. Teachers encourage pupils across all subjects to apply their skills in communication, critical thinking and collaboration. In history, geography and science, leaders use a subject-specialism model to deliver the curriculum. This approach engages pupils and sustains their curiosity. Leaders tailor wider curriculum experiences to pupils' interests, ambitions and talents.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils build fluency and confidence. Where needed, staff teach phonics effectively and systematically and address gaps quickly.

Teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence. They model new concepts accurately and check pupils' understanding so that they can provide additional support promptly when needed. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary systematically so that pupils use high-level vocabulary confidently across the curriculum.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

There is a highly inclusive culture at the school. The school welcomes all pupils and has high aspirations for each individual. Pupils thrive because their needs are identified and addressed quickly. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those previously known to social care and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff adapt strategies in the classroom so that all pupils access learning alongside their peers and receive effective support to overcome barriers. Leaders know pupils well and ensure that they receive timely, targeted support to help them succeed in their learning. They are also proactive in seeking wellbeing support for pupils.

Leaders deploy staff effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. Staff provide the right level of support while building pupils' independence. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and ensure that support is timely and effective. They have a secure understanding of the provision for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils because they evaluate its impact and review pupils' targets regularly.

Staff receive high-quality training. Leaders work with families and professionals to shape the support that pupils receive. They use additional funding effectively and creatively to remove barriers for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders' determination to provide a highly ambitious offer for all pupils is evident throughout their work. Leaders understand the community that they serve and they are rigorous in their use of evaluation to refine their approaches. Leaders carefully check the quality of the curriculum, and the consistency of classroom practice. They use this information to adapt approaches to ensure that pupils receive a consistently well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum. Leaders prioritise areas for improvement well.

Leaders ensure that staff receive effective training to continually develop their practice. Staff feel well supported by leaders around their workload and wellbeing. They value the opportunities that leaders provide for them to develop in their roles. Staff feel proud to work at Fulwell Junior School.

Parents, families and the wider community are heavily involved in school life. Leaders ensure that they engage parents in important aspects of their children's learning. Leaders draw on the knowledge of professionals and external agencies so that pupils who face any barriers to learning are swiftly supported and enabled to succeed.

Those responsible for governance have a deep understanding of the school's work. Decisions are consistently made in pupils' best interests. Governors understand their statutory duties. They provide rigorous but meaningful challenge to leaders alongside highly effective support. This results in sustained improvement in areas that leaders prioritise.

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

Pupils thrive at this highly aspirational, warm and welcoming school. They feel a real sense of belonging and pride in the uniqueness of the offer that they receive. Pupils rise to the high standards that staff expect from them. They develop their future aspirations as a result of highly effective work around careers. Pupils engage in a broad range of experiences that develop them exceptionally well for secondary school. This includes learning in 'The Lab' and work on creative arts in their studio. Pupils behave consistently with integrity and self-discipline. They care deeply about one another and demonstrate the utmost respect towards other pupils and adults. Pupils' manners are exemplary. Pupils show a strong sense of responsibility towards their school environment. This is because many of the facilities have been developed through projects that they have been involved in.

Pupils' views of behaviour at the school are very positive and they say they feel safe in school. They say that bullying is very rare. They know that if it does occur, staff will deal with it swiftly. Pupils say they really enjoy their learning and as a result they attend well. They value the wider opportunities they receive to develop as citizens of the world and the work that staff do to prepare them for life beyond school. Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, and those who may face other barriers to learning. Pupils' attainment in national tests is above average. Pupils engage weekly in 'faculties' to develop their critical thinking, communication and collaboration. As a result, pupils communicate with maturity. They are confident in expressing their ideas and listening to others' perspectives. They are able to contribute thoughtfully to group discussions and problem-solving activities.

Next steps

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

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Daniel Suddick.

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, governors and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Amy Blackburn, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Deborah Ashcroft, Ofsted Inspector

Katie Lowe, 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

350

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

360

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)

10.00%

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

1.43%

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

8.29%

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

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

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	76%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	60%	Above

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	86%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	73%	Above

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)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	72%	Above
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	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	91%	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	55%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	44%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	50%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	74%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	61%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	55%	68%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	69%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	67%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	66%	0 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	74%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	70%	80%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 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	61%	78%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	78%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	75%	79%	-4 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)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	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)	4.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.6%	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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