

Grindon Infant School

Address: Gleneagles Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 9QN

Unique reference number (URN): 108766

Inspection report: 20 January 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' actions are improving attendance. It is a high priority for the whole school. Leaders closely monitor and evaluate the attendance of pupils. They take meaningful and prompt action to improve attendance for groups of pupils and for individuals. Leaders consider the needs of pupils and their families and support them effectively. Well-targeted support is improving attendance for individual pupils and for pupil groups, such as those who are disadvantaged. Leaders, including governors, know that this focused work on attendance remains a priority to further build on recent improvements.

This is a calm and nurturing place to learn. Leaders' expectations for behaviour are high. Staff share these expectations and pupils rise to them. From the 2-year-old provision onwards, the caring relationships pupils and staff have help pupils to behave well and stay focused. Pupils enjoy school. They learn in purposeful and supportive classrooms. Positive behaviour is praised and celebrated. Pupils enjoy the rewards and acknowledgement that they receive in recognition of the sensible choices they make. Where pupils need support with their behaviour, they receive this promptly. Leaders have a secure oversight of any incidents, including bullying, that occur in school. They deal with these incidents quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a clear and ambitious curriculum that reflects national expectations. The curriculum is broad and well ordered. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of this curriculum and its impact on pupils. Leaders check to understand where this is working well and where there may be room for further improvement. They have made research-based decisions to further strengthen this aspect of the school's offer. A focus on oracy is meaningful in ensuring that pupils, particularly those in the early years, gain the important skills they need to communicate effectively. This focus also extends to writing. Staff carefully support pupils to develop secure early mark-making and fine and gross motor skills. This strengthens pupils' ability to write. This step-by-step approach to learning is also evident in the mathematics curriculum.

The curriculum is generally taught well. Staff receive the training and support that they need to understand the subjects that they teach. Leaders' work to improve the teaching of phonics is clear. Staff's knowledge of early reading enables them to teach this effectively. Those pupils who need extra support with early reading receive appropriate intervention to help them catch up. Adaptations, both in terms of physical resources and scaffolding, are typically used well across the curriculum. In some curriculum areas, however, these adaptations are not as well matched to pupils' learning and needs as they could be.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a bright start to their time at the school. Parents and carers speak positively about the early years offer. They feel their children are well cared for. Highly skilled staff support children well. Leaders rightly prioritise communication and language for children in

this provision. Staff model language effectively to help embed and extend language for the different ages and stages of children in this provision. Quality opportunities to rehearse this language take place throughout the day across the 2-year-old provision and into the Reception Year.

Leaders have been prompt and careful in reshaping learning to ensure that carefully chosen opportunities to develop the most important skills and knowledge children require in order to be successful are prioritised from the start. Staff carefully consider children's starting points and maximise opportunities to help them to make progress, which they do. Leaders place a strong emphasis on physical development. This helps children in the 2-year-old provision to build core strength ready for effective mark-making. Learning is centred around high-quality stories. Children in Reception Year retell current books with confidence. Younger children benefit from well-structured sessions to secure their awareness of sounds and rhythm.

Routines are clear and children follow them well. They talk enthusiastically about their learning. Close liaison with key stage 1 ensures that staff have a clear understanding of each child's level of development. Children who struggle to secure the most important skills that they need for their future learning receive effective targeted support as they move into Year 1. As a result, children in the early years are typically well prepared for the challenges of key stage 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

A vision of inclusion for all pupils is clear and widely shared among leaders and staff. Pupils, regardless of the barriers to learning or wellbeing that they may face, play a part in school life. Leaders take prompt action to understand and unpick barriers for pupils. They strive to be a listening school, working with families to identify individual pupil needs quickly. They seek and act on advice from professionals, when needed, to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work effectively with other partners, such as the local authority and social care.

Leaders monitor the impact of the actions that they take. They check the support provided for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. The pupil premium strategy is carefully considered. Leaders ensure that funding is used to reduce barriers to pupils' learning. They have made some positive changes to whole-school practice to support pupils who join the school with low starting points. This can be seen in the focus on developing pupils' communication and language skills to enable them to access their learning confidently. Staff benefit from bespoke training to meet pupils' needs. This equips staff with the expertise that they need to tailor support for pupils, for example through daily sensory and movement activities to help pupils to be ready for their learning. Where needed, adaptations are typically purposeful and help pupils to learn alongside their peers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders focus sharply on the right areas for school improvement. They have quickly redeveloped some parts of their curriculum to better prepare pupils for their next steps in learning. Leaders and staff take the time to reflect and work together to find solutions. Equally, they know and celebrate successful practice and the positive impact this has on

pupils. The vision and positive ethos of the school are ever present. It is shared by governors and staff. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

Governors work collaboratively with school leaders. They ensure that statutory duties are met. Governors understand the school's context well and play an active part in school life. They too are committed to removing barriers to learning so that all pupils, including those who may be disadvantaged, can succeed. Governors provide sufficient challenge to leaders and remain focused on the right areas for development.

Leaders work effectively to engage with parents and carers. Staff foster positive relationships through activities such as parent cafés and whole school events. Professional development and training are timely and well considered, matched to the school's needs. Staff access nationally recognised qualifications as well as specific training linked to pupils' needs, such as sensory needs training. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported. Leaders ensure that wellbeing is carefully considered. They make suitable adjustments where needed.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils are proud of the wide range of opportunities they have to learn beyond the classroom. A well-planned offer of educational visits enables pupils to experience new activities. Visits help pupils connect their learning together. For example, pupils visited a regional railway museum to strengthen their work in history. These visits sit alongside other exciting opportunities, such as experiencing snowtubing or meeting owls.

Leaders ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum is well structured. It is complemented by a safety curriculum, which is effective in helping pupils understand how to keep safe. They confidently explain how to keep safe online. Pupils live out and understand fundamental British values in their daily learning and behaviour. They are caring and friendly. Pupils learn to recognise the characteristics of good friendship. They know how to treat others fairly, including those who may be different from them.

Leaders ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make the most of during- and after-school activities. Pupils celebrate the wide range of opportunities on offer. They participate in clubs linked to sport and music, for example. They enjoy being part of a rock band. This helps pupils to talk about the different instruments that they play with increasing confidence.

Leaders focus on pupils' wellbeing throughout the school day. Pupils have a secure understanding of what is right and wrong. This leads to harmonious breaktimes with pupils playing well together. Leaders' focus on developing outdoor play starts in early years. Older pupils are highly motivated as they use the wide range of equipment on the playground each day. This includes playing with and making bubbles, and reading.

Achievement

Over recent years, too many pupils have not secured the skills they need to read fluently. This has meant that outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been inconsistent and below national averages. Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve these outcomes. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes in national outcomes. Children in early years make progress from their starting points. Nevertheless, some children leave Reception Year not ready for the key stage 1 curriculum. Leaders have made pertinent changes to ensure that more children are ready by the time they leave early years.

Across the curriculum, pupils' work demonstrates that they make progress through the curriculum from their starting points. Pupils usually remember what they have learned and talk with enthusiasm about the important knowledge they remember in mathematics, history and geography. For example, they are able to describe the qualities of an island or the distinct properties of 3D shapes.

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

Pupils benefit from the clear vision and high expectations leaders have for them. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are supported to build their learning in small manageable steps so that they develop their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. However, despite progress from their starting points, over time, too many pupils lack the skills to confidently decode and read with fluency by the time they leave the school.

This is a calm and caring school. Secure and positive relationships between pupils and staff help pupils to arrive happy and ready to learn each day. Leaders and staff work together effectively to ensure that pupils make a positive start to their learning journey. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to attend school regularly. Most pupils do. Leaders set high standards for behaviour and pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils show respect to each other, staff and visitors. They learn in settled and harmonious classrooms. Pupils feel safe at the school. They know adults will always help them. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of bullying. They know that if this happens, staff will sort it out quickly.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of exciting and engaging opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils talk animatedly about their improved break times. The wide range of outdoor learning on offer enables pupils to play and socialise with each other while demonstrating teamwork and kindness. They value being able to vote and have their views heard. This helps pupils to prepare well for life beyond school. After-school clubs are well attended. Pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in a range of activities, including scootering and swimming.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that work to further improve outcomes enables pupils to be increasingly ready for their next stages in learning, with a particular focus on securing strong foundations in reading.
 - Leaders should ensure that adaptations to learning are consistently highly effective and precisely matched to pupils' needs.
 - Leaders should continue to embed practices relating to the improvements made in pupils' attendance so that attendance rates improve further.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Gill Bramley

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 the headteacher and other school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with representatives from the local governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery, including provision for 2-year-olds.

Headteacher: Andrea Charlton

Lead inspector:

Emily Stevens, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kathryn Fenwick, Ofsted Inspector

Jo Warner, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

177

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

232

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)

44.80%

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

1.13%

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

11.86%

Close to 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).

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 term)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.4%	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 (2 term)	23.2%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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