

The Spinney Primary School

Address: Hayster Drive, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 9PB

Unique reference number (URN): 110765

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

At the end of Year 6, many pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 1, pupils gain the knowledge expected in phonics, which means many become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils' work shows that pupils typically make progress through the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress from their starting points. This is because, as with others, they get the practise they need to secure their knowledge over time. However, some pupils do not secure some important knowledge in writing and mathematics as well as they could. Pupils' achievement in these subjects could be even better. Leaders have identified this and have put in place appropriate actions to further raise achievement.

Pupils who are newer to speaking English, and others with a more limited vocabulary, learn new words and use them confidently in their work. This is because staff focus on this. All pupils benefit from this and use more ambitious vocabulary across different subjects. This means that typically pupils are ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Many pupils attend regularly. Others are improving their attendance because of targeted support. Leaders focus on pupils whose attendance is low, including those who are disadvantaged. They work closely with parents and carers to understand and reduce any difficulties that affect attendance. They adapt support to meet each pupil's needs. For example, pupils can attend breakfast club, which helps them feel ready for the school day. Leaders' strategies help more pupils attend regularly. Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend well.

Pupils generally behave well. They are calm in lessons and around the school. This means they can concentrate on their work. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and want to achieve highly. Routines in classes are well established, so pupils can move from one activity to another without losing learning time. This also supports pupils who may find change more difficult, as they know what to expect. Pupils speak to visitors politely and show good manners. They know they need to listen to each other's points of view and not interrupt others when they are speaking. At breaktimes, pupils enjoy playing together and there are few disagreements. Pupils are clear that they have strategies to help them manage these, but adults will always help if they need it. There are few serious behaviour incidents. Staff deal with these promptly and effectively if they occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a broad curriculum. It includes key knowledge and vocabulary. It sets out what pupils should learn step by step. This is important because it gives teachers a clear plan. Typically, staff use the school's chosen teaching approaches well. For example, they

recap previous learning. This helps pupils make links to what they already know. This is particularly important for pupils who find it harder to remember new ideas.

The school has prioritised the teaching of phonics and reading. Reading is generally taught well. Over time, pupils learn to read confidently and fluently. Many pupils enjoy reading. Staff promote this in different ways. For example, they ask pupils what themes they would like in books.

Many pupils are skilled writers. They use ambitious vocabulary and well-constructed sentences. Teachers use ambitious authors and texts. However, some pupils do not learn correct letter formation and orientation as quickly as they could or as early as they should. They continue to form letters incorrectly and do not always position them accurately on the line. This limits how well they can focus on expressing their ideas.

Pupils enjoy learning mathematics. Generally, teachers explain new knowledge in a clear way. Tasks secure pupils' understanding through practice. However, when pupils complete mathematical recording, teachers do not always check accuracy closely enough. This means some pupils do not set out their work correctly, which sometimes results in errors.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised the early years. The curriculum is well designed and meets children's needs. For example, the strong focus on developing children's vocabulary benefits them all. It is particularly important for those who are new to speaking English and those who hear a limited range of words at home. A wide vocabulary helps children understand instructions and express their ideas clearly. It also supports reading and writing as they move through the school.

Teaching is highly effective. Clear explanations and strong subject knowledge mean children understand what to do when completing tasks. This helps young children make positive progress towards their learning goals. Leaders design learning environments carefully, so children stay focused and build their knowledge and skills. As a result, children achieve well. They are ready for their next stage.

Children get along well with each other. They learn how to share, take turns and work in small groups. They build positive friendships. This is important because it helps children feel a sense of belonging. Staff teach social skills and help pupils understand their emotions well. This helps children talk openly, explore situations and learn what to do without feeling worried.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff identify pupils' needs quickly and precisely. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also spot early signs of additional barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, including for disadvantaged pupils or those known to social care.

Clear systems and collaboration with parents and carers help staff understand each pupil's strengths and any challenges they may face. Leaders put support in place early when

needed. For example, they use art therapy to help pupils build friendships. Leaders consider what each pupil needs at any time. This includes planning carefully for key points, such as moving to a new year group. Support builds pupils' confidence. It also helps them become more independent when completing tasks. This means they feel more successful when learning.

For those pupils who face other barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, staff make sure they are included fully in school life. This includes taking part in clubs, trips and wider opportunities. These shared experiences help pupils get to know others, build friendships and feel part of the school community. Which is important for more vulnerable pupils. Leaders make effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, so that they can benefit from what the school offers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are clear about the vision for the school. Together with governors, they have taken effective action to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. This includes changes to the curriculum and improvements to teaching across the school. As a result, the curriculum and teaching are now at the expected standard.

Governors meet their statutory duties. For example, they make sure pupils learn a suitable personal, social and health education programme. They also support leaders and staff with wellbeing. They work closely with leaders to provide both support and appropriate challenge. This helps governors hold leaders to account.

Leaders take an outward-looking approach to school improvement. They seek effective practice from other schools and work with external professionals to strengthen teaching. This helps staff learn from proven approaches and to continue to improve the quality of teaching.

Staff are positive about the school's development programme. Staff reflect on their practice, try new approaches and develop their expertise. This helps ensure that teaching continues to improve and meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders manage staff's workload carefully and support staff wellbeing when needed.

Parents and carers are generally positive about the education and care their children receive. Leaders and governors work closely with the local community to build strong relationships and support pupils' development. They work with local services and share information to provide support to parents. This means families receive the right help at the right time.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development programme is well considered. Leaders plan this carefully across the curriculum and wider school life. They review provision often. They refine the programme, so that it meets pupils' needs.

The relationships and health education curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. For example, younger children learn about being a

good friend. Generally, across the school, relationships are positive. Pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils feel safe and valued. They understand how to stay safe online and in daily life.

Pupils gain a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They explain the rule of law and why it matters, for example. Pupils understand that rules protect people. Additionally, they link this knowledge to everyday life in school.

Older pupils speak confidently about their understanding of discrimination. They know it is wrong to treat people unfairly because of race, gender, religion or identity. This helps them understand diversity and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that all pupils can take part in extracurricular activities, including disadvantaged pupils. They track participation and remove any difficulties that prevent pupils from taking part, such as cost. Leaders also review the programme trips and visitors to the school. They keep what works and change what does not. This keeps experiences meaningful.

Pupils benefit from effective pastoral support. Consequently, pupils feel safe and cared for. Systems such as worry boxes help pupils share concerns. Staff respond quickly to these, meaning pupils trust them.

Pupils take on roles such as ambassadors. They have additional responsibilities, for example, they lead assemblies. This builds pupils' confidence. Leaders also draw on the community. Parents and carers visit the school to speak about their work. Pupils learn about careers such as archaeology. This broadens their understanding of future jobs and raises ambition.

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

Pupils love coming to school. Most attend regularly. They also enjoy their learning. This is because staff make lessons enjoyable. Positive relationships exist between pupils and staff. Pupils trust staff to help them and keep them safe. When they have worries, pupils know who to talk to. They understand the importance of sharing how they feel. Additionally, they know that staff will support them.

Pupils generally behave well. They show kindness to others. Pupils have good manners. For example, they listen to each other and take turns. They understand the school rules and follow them. When needed, they respond well to guidance from staff. At breaktimes, pupils enjoy talking and playing together. The youngest children know the school routines. They feel happy and are safe. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that if it did occur it would be dealt with effectively.

Pupils speak a range of languages. They come from different cultures and countries. Pupils take pride in this diversity. Additionally, leaders use this to help pupils learn about differences. Pupils talk confidently about issues such as discrimination. Class discussions and assemblies develop their understanding of right and wrong.

Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve highly and make progress from their starting points. This is because staff know pupils well. They understand pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' knowledge grows from their starting points.

Pupils enjoy the many additional experiences they have, for example, they visit the botanical centre. These experiences help pupils understand their learning in greater depth.

Older pupils take on additional responsibilities, such as acting as school ambassadors. They explain that these roles help them become more confident because they act as role models for younger pupils. They also take responsibility for improving the school community. For example, by leading assemblies and events.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent and clear focus on helping pupils secure accurate letter and number formation so that pupils' accuracy improves and does not hinder their achievement in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders should continue their work to improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum and further raise pupils' attainment.

About this inspection

The Co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Bev Jones and Omodeleola Makinde

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, deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents and carers during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body and local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
Since the last inspection, the school has a new leadership team and governing body.
The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Martha Hughes

Lead inspector:

Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Winyard, Ofsted Inspector

Rob Edwards, 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

187

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

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)

8.02%

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

4.81%

Close to 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

12.83%

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 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).

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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	97%	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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	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)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	63%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	75%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	75%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	75%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	63%	68%	-5 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	75%	78%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	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)	9.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.6%	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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