

Stanley Burnside Primary School

Address: Mendip Terrace, South Stanley, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 6QP

Unique reference number (URN): 114033

Inspection report: 17 February 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 have strengthened their strategies for improving pupils' attendance. Attendance has improved due to robust systems and effective work with families. This includes removing barriers through a parental hub. Pupils who have found it difficult to attend school due to their social and emotional needs have been offered a range of support to help them reintegrate successfully. This has led to a decrease in the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Across the school, pupils typically behave well. They generally take their learning seriously and move calmly around school. Staff know families well, and parents speak highly of the support that their children receive. Pupils feel a sense of belonging. Staff draw on external expertise and use a range of strategies, including for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has further reduced the incidents of poor behaviour in lessons and during social times. It has also led to a reduction in suspensions. Pupils treat one another with respect and say bullying is rare.

Staff have received training to ensure they take a consistent and restorative approach to helping pupils to behave well. They use various tools, including adapted methods for pupils with non-verbal communication needs and explicit teaching for pupils joining key stage 2. Staff use rewards such as golden wristbands to celebrate good behaviour.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise inclusion. Every pupil is seen and valued, regardless of their background or starting point. Systems to identify pupils' individual needs and to address barriers to learning, including the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known or previously known to children's social care, have been strengthened recently.

When necessary, leaders draw on specialist advice to shape the support for pupils. Through a range of pathways and provisions around the school, pupils receive bespoke teaching. The impact of this comprehensive approach can be seen in the development of pupils' emotional wellbeing. It has also secured improved behaviour across the school and better attendance. Leaders' evaluations of pupils' academic progress are less accurate, so gaps in knowledge have widened in reading, writing, handwriting and spelling for some pupils.

Leaders provide appropriate training to equip staff to help them meet the diverse needs of pupils. They generally make suitable adaptations in their lessons to enable pupils with SEND to fully participate.

Leaders use additional funding effectively to strengthen teaching, provide targeted academic support and enrich pupils' experiences. Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately and in the best interest of pupils.

The school has a well-designed programme for personal development and wellbeing. The programme begins in the early years, where children learn to mix with 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds in the same space. From the very start of their schooling, pupils are taught the importance of regulating their emotions and respectful relationships. They also learn about how to keep their bodies and minds healthy. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep safe online and manage risks they may face in their own community.

Pupils understand and practise the importance of respect and tolerance. They enjoy building their collection of awards when they exemplify the school's values of resilience, respect, independence, health and equality. Pupils discuss these values confidently. A small number of pupils do not recall what they have learned about world religions, cultures and fundamental British values consistently well.

Pupils' experiences are widened by a considered programme of educational visits, school visitors and enrichment clubs. Leaders monitor attendance and ensure disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known or previously known to children's social care are enabled to attend. Staff adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND to ensure it is accessible to them and enables them to keep safe and understand changes to their bodies.

Pupils are given a voice and develop agency through membership of committees, such as the eco, diversity, and health and safety committees. They report to the pupil leadership team, which has had an impact on improving the school environment and the types of after-school clubs offered.

Leaders introduced a programme of events to raise pupils' career aspirations, including visits by the police, RNLI and Dogs Trust. Pupils hear from local employers and gain an understanding of the breadth of jobs available within a company.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 do not secure the basic skills in reading, writing and number facts required to become fluent readers, writers, and mathematicians. This is shown by the decline in outcomes for the phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check. However, by the end of key stage 2, pupils generally acquire the knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage of education.

Despite leaders' ambitions, a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities still do not achieve as highly as they could.

Pupils' achievement across the curriculum varies. For example, in science, pupils can talk knowledgeably about their learning and think scientifically by comparing the properties of materials, using appropriate terminology. However, in other subjects, they find it hard to

recall what they have studied. For instance, they could not explain the purpose and features of Roman forts, following a recent educational visit and teaching focused on this knowledge.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have only recently started to address gaps in pupils' basic skills, such as handwriting, punctuation, and spelling. They have not ensured that younger pupils in the early stages of reading and writing receive the support that they need to catch up. Time in lessons is not used effectively to help pupils practise their reading and writing. Teachers do not deliver the school's phonics scheme consistently well. Sometimes, they do not insist that all pupils join in or that they are reading accurately. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not routinely provided with the support they need to help them make progress from their starting points.

Since the last inspection, leaders have developed the curriculum, and this has improved pupils' enjoyment and interest. The curriculum is thoughtfully enriched by appropriate visits to local places of interest. However, at times, teachers do not present important knowledge clearly. Pupils therefore struggle to recall key concepts.

Teachers' subject knowledge is enhanced through ongoing training. Leaders have ensured that there are systems in place to check pupils' understanding over time. However, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in lessons carefully enough to ensure that pupils have secured the new knowledge or skill that has just been introduced.

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders lack sufficient ambition for older children in the mixed 2-, 3-, and 4-year-old provision. This results in Reception children not consistently receiving opportunities during the day to fully embed, deepen, and extend their newly gained knowledge. The curriculum outlines how children's learning should develop over time. However, there is inconsistency in its implementation, which hampers their readiness for key stage 1. Generally, the 2- and 3-year-olds begin their learning and development securely, but this is less consistent during the Reception Year.

Children behave well and interact positively with one another. They benefit from daily story time where they hear teachers reading to them. This provides them with opportunities to repeat the refrains and become more familiar with a wider range of vocabulary. Children are articulate and enjoy recalling the story to adults throughout the day. Some children remembered all the ingredients they had needed to make gingerbread men earlier in the week. Children usually stay focused and work well with adults and peers, as well as independently.

High-quality adult interactions support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary. Children are taught the skills they need to read and write through daily phonics. However, they have limited opportunities to apply these skills, which restricts progress and fluency. Leaders engage well with parents and carers, particularly when identifying needs and barriers.

Leaders and governors do not consistently address priorities with the required urgency. They have not addressed the ongoing decline in the number of pupils passing the phonics screening check quickly enough or the declining proportion of pupils ready for Year 1. However, they do know the school well. Leaders have focused on meeting the various social, emotional and wellbeing needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders and governors have recently taken steps to address gaps in pupils' reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting knowledge. There are early signs in some year groups that these efforts have made a positive difference. There remains some inconsistency in how well staff apply new strategies, for example in relation to maintaining high expectations that pupils form letters and numbers accurately, as well as spell and use capital letters correctly.

Governors are committed to the school. They understand the school's context and the increasing complexity of pupils' needs. They recognise where their challenge has made a positive difference, such as improving attendance and ensuring additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils. They also recognise the need to continue checking and challenging leaders' actions to ensure that these lead to better academic outcomes for pupils as they move through the school.

Staff say that leaders are mindful of their welfare and workload. They feel valued and appreciate the professional learning that they access, including the training they have received to support pupils with SEND. Leaders have built constructive relationships with parents, carers and the wider community. Parents appreciate the school's support.

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

Stanley Burnside is an inclusive school, where all pupils are welcomed and valued. Pupils build positive relationships with staff who know them well. They usually behave well and show courtesy and respect. If bullying occurs, teachers address it swiftly. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. Through the curriculum, assemblies and visiting speakers, they learn how to stay safe online and in the community.

As pupils journey through the school, they enjoy their experiences both in and outside of lessons. They especially enjoy visits to local places of interest, as they say 'it makes learning real.'

By the end of key stage 2, pupils generally achieve well. However, younger pupils do not master the key skills needed to read and write fluently. In most year groups, pupils often do not write letters and numbers accurately. They frequently spell basic words incorrectly or do not use capital letters properly.

Leaders work hard to identify the barriers pupils might face, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They identify support to help pupils overcome many challenges. This has led to improved attendance and more access to learning in class. Additionally, staff teach pupils how to keep their bodies and brains healthy.

The school values are embodied by the 'Burnside bunch', a group of dinosaurs representing each value. Pupils enjoy earning badges that recognise when they have demonstrated one of the values. Through assemblies, the curriculum, and community activities, pupils gain an understanding of why everyone should be treated equally. They recognise and demonstrate the importance of being respectful and tolerant. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Parents are supportive of the school. They say that they benefit from a range of life courses provided by the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that checks on pupils' learning in class and during any wider support are used effectively to identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should guide staff in teaching pupils the foundational knowledge needed to learn well and achieve their best in statutory assessments, such as the phonics screening and multiplication tables checks.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff provide children in the early years provision with tasks and resources that are sufficiently ambitious so that they are better prepared for the next stages in their education.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a secure and detailed knowledge of fundamental British Values.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Miss Anna Bowden.

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

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Charlton

Lead inspector:

Nicky White, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Malcolm Kirtley, Ofsted Inspector

Amy Cookson, 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 17 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

176

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)

68.75%

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

2.84%

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

20.45%

Above 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).

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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	60%	Below

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	63%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	65%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

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	62%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	65%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	71%	Below

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	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	85%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	73%	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 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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	41%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	28%	44%	Below

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	55%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	56%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Close to average

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	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	55%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	39%	59%	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 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	39%	68%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	41%	67%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	28%	66%	-39 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	51%	78%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	78%	-31 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	79%	-26 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	39%	79%	-40 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 (2 term)	7.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.9%	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)	28.3%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	42.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.8%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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