

Delves Lane Primary School

Address: Delves Lane, Consett, County Durham, DH8 7ES

Unique reference number (URN): 114047

Inspection report: 9 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

Inclusion

Expected standard

Staff work hard to know each pupil well. The barriers to learning that some pupils face are swiftly identified. Actions are taken to help pupils overcome these in a timely and effective way. Leaders have been proactive in recently managing an increasing number of pupils with vulnerabilities. Leaders typically have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are generally supported to stay in class so that they do not develop further gaps in their learning. Staff have recently received training that helps them to provide appropriate adaptations for pupils who need additional support. Where necessary, leaders engage with external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the specialist support they need. For example, where necessary, pupils receive support from the school counsellor for their social and emotional needs. Leaders work with parents and carers to tailor plans that carefully break down planned support into achievable steps for staff to follow. Plans are regularly reviewed and fine-tuned to maximise the impact they have on pupils' progress. In the early years, children are screened for speech and language difficulties. Support is provided to help address any identified needs.

Leaders use some of the additional funding they receive to support disadvantaged pupils with their academic achievement. The funding is also used to enhance their wider experiences. However, sometimes, the specific barriers that some disadvantaged pupils face linked to their academic learning are not always addressed quickly enough.

Most parents and carers are happy with the support provided for their children with SEND.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils develop their knowledge through the taught personal development programme. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to make healthy choices and stay physically and mentally healthy. Across the year groups, pupils are taught to understand more about life in modern Britain. They learn about other faiths and cultures through visitors to the school on 'inter-faith day', visits to places of worship and by studying a diversity of texts within the reading curriculum. Although pupils' understanding of these topics, and of protected characteristics, is evident, this is not always explored in sufficient depth. Leaders promote wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem through a human rights initiative for which they have won awards.

As the school is located on a very busy road, leaders ensure that younger pupils learn and practise how to cross roads safely. Older pupils participate in safe cycling sessions. Across the school, pupils develop an in-depth understanding of how to stay safe online and in the local community. Pupils also learn about water safety. Pupils can take on a leadership responsibility, such as representing their class on the school council; however, these opportunities are limited to a few children. The school council is currently campaigning to their local MP and local council to implement some traffic-calming measures on the main road.

Leaders place importance on pupils' wider development through a broad range of experiences. The curriculum is further enriched through a wide variety of different visits, including a residential. There is a broad range of after-school clubs that pupils really value. Some of pupils' favourite clubs include gymnastics, movie club and dodgeball. Leaders have started to track pupils' participation in the wider opportunities they offer. Leaders are working towards ensuring that more pupils with vulnerabilities have access to after-school clubs.

Pupils' wellbeing is promoted throughout teaching, using research-based strategies. For instance, pupils learn the importance of expressing gratitude daily to boost their mood. The school raises pupils' aspirations and understanding of different careers. This is further enhanced by a visit to a local car manufacturer. Pupils reflect on what qualifications they need to access a range of jobs. This helps pupils to recognise the importance of their education in planning for a future career.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have not achieved well in national tests. Pupils do not secure the knowledge that they need in reading, writing and mathematics to be ready for the next stage in their education. In the Year 4 multiplication check and the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils again do not achieve well when compared to the national average. While the teaching of phonics has recently been strengthened, a significant minority of younger pupils do not acquire the skills they need to read and write.

Leaders have recently taken decisive steps to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics, reading and writing. This work is showing some signs of success. However, in some year groups and across the wider curriculum, a significant number of pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Additional support for pupils with vulnerabilities has been improved, enabling them to make better progress from their starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Systems for analysing pupil absences are not as effective as they could be. The school has not always prioritised resources in addressing daily absences and poor patterns of attendance over time. Although leaders check patterns closely, until recently, actions taken had not secured sustained levels of improvement, particularly for pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders have recently changed the way they promote the importance of attending school to parents and pupils. They now have established clear procedures for addressing poor attendance. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

The school is generally calm and safe. Most staff have high expectations for how pupils should behave. In lessons, pupils typically listen and concentrate on their learning appropriately. They are typically respectful towards one another and towards adults. They understand the school's expectations for behaviour. During lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils follow routines and rules. Pupils know that staff will deal with any problems that arise, such

as unkind behaviour, even though this is rare. Reasonable adjustments and effective support are in place to help pupils manage their behaviour. Suspensions are used appropriately.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have recently taken steps to strengthen the teaching of English, phonics, science and mathematics. They have ensured that the curriculum for these subjects sets out the key knowledge that pupils need to know so that more of them are ready for their next stage of education. Elsewhere, the quality and implementation of the curriculum is more variable. In some subjects, newly created plans are yet to be implemented. This means that pupils are not securing the key knowledge and skills they need to progress within these subjects. In some year groups, there are large time gaps between the teaching of topics that build on from previous learning. This makes it hard for pupils to secure their knowledge and understanding over time.

Staff have recently started adapting the curriculum to ensure that pupils who need additional support can access learning in lessons. Staff and leaders typically use assessment to check gaps in pupils' learning. In English, phonics, mathematics and science, they ensure that key knowledge, concepts and skills are revisited regularly until gaps are closed. This is more consistent in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2.

Leaders have recently strengthened staff's subject knowledge in teaching the core subjects. Staff have also received professional development to equip them with the knowledge they need to meet the growing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite this, there remains some variability in the effectiveness of teaching.

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders have created a suitable plan of what staff in the early years should teach and when. This includes the identification of key stories and rhymes. However, consideration has not been fully made to the key vocabulary that leaders want children to learn. This impacts on the way that staff develop children's language and communication through high-quality interactions. Furthermore, although staff have received training linked to this, the training is not applied consistently. Consequently, some children, particularly those who face barriers to learning, do not acquire a broad vocabulary as quickly or comprehensively as they should.

Leaders have recently started teaching children early phonics and mathematics as soon as they join school. Children in Reception receive precise phonics teaching. They typically acquire the knowledge they need for early reading and writing. However, there are limited opportunities for children to apply their newly acquired phonics and mathematical knowledge across the provision. Sometimes, the resources that children access do not support them to apply their knowledge in these areas of learning. Some children struggle to recall details about recent topics. For example, although they can identify different insects such as butterflies and ladybirds, they struggle to recall other facts that they have been taught about them.

Children in the early years have their welfare needs met, and they are well cared for. They engage well with each other and adults. They are growing in their independence and

resilience. Leaders have recently begun tracking children more carefully and providing targeted support to help them be ready for Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders understand the school's context. They have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. While action has been taken to address improvement priorities, the pace of implementation has, in some instances, been too slow. Recent professional learning for staff is linked to the school's strategy for improvement. However, the monitoring of the curriculum and pupils' achievement across subjects is currently inconsistent. This has led to some key areas for improvement not being addressed quickly enough.

Leaders have introduced appropriate strategies to support the wellbeing needs of disadvantaged pupils and in identifying and addressing the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, more precision is needed to identify and address barriers to learning for other vulnerable pupils to ensure they also make accelerated progress.

Most governors are new in their roles. They have started to know their roles and uphold their statutory responsibilities. They are developing their knowledge about the school's work. They are beginning to know what is working well and what needs further improvement. They acknowledge the need to provide further challenge to leaders to support an increase in the pace of improvement. Governors make appropriate checks on how leaders manage staff workload and support their wellbeing.

Leaders engage parents positively, involving other agencies to strengthen this support where necessary. Most parents are positive about the school and value all the staff do to support their children. However, some parents of vulnerable pupils are not fully satisfied with the communication they receive and the level of support that the school provides.

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

Pupils arrive cheerfully to school. They are welcomed by staff and each other. Routines are embedded across the year groups, creating a calm start to the day. Pupils engage in a variety of morning learning tasks that embed key knowledge. Right from the earliest stages of their education, pupils are taught to read and write accurately. They develop a love of stories. Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum, which is enriched by visits to local farms, museums and theatre. Pupils benefit from a focus on developing a positive mindset. Most pupils attend regularly, but a significant minority miss too much of their education, which hinders the progress they make over time.

Pupils are sometimes lively, but they typically respond well to requests from staff. They mostly engage with their lessons throughout the day. Generally, they show respect to staff and each other. The youngest children play well together, share resources and typically sustain their concentration. Pupils relish their playtimes, where they engage in a variety of

activities that build resilience, encourage calculated risk-taking and foster relationships. They particularly love climbing the designated trees!

Pupils say they feel safe. On the rare occasions there is bullying, staff address this swiftly and effectively. Interactive theatre productions, themed weeks and assemblies teach pupils the importance of being kind to each other. New pupils who join the school mid-year are warmly welcomed and quickly make friends.

Recent changes mean that pupils currently make better progress in mathematics, English and science than was previously the case. However, some aspects of the wider curriculum and the regularity of its delivery are variable. As a result, some pupils do not consistently build knowledge securely over time. This affects how pupils achieve in subjects such as geography, history and art.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the key knowledge, including vocabulary, that children in the early years provision need to learn is identified and taught consistently, and that staff are further supported to engage with children in purposeful, high-quality interactions that help develop children's language and vocabulary.
 - Leaders should ensure that the resources provided to children in the early years enable them to apply their phonics and mathematical knowledge across the provision.
 - Leaders should strengthen the resources they use to identify and reduce barriers to attendance, to secure sustained improvement for all pupils, especially those who are persistently absent.
 - Leaders should implement and monitor the newly designed foundation curriculum to strengthen pupils' achievements, ensuring that pupils' knowledge and skills are built over time in all subjects.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop deep and secure knowledge across the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum, particularly of protected characteristics, other faiths and consent.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Michael Boyd.

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, other leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers. They also met with a representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rebecca Woods

Lead inspector:

Nicky White, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Melanie Maitland, Ofsted Inspector

Jim Hindess, 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 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

286

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

351

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)

48.19%

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

4.20%

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

30.07%

Well above 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	42%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	48%	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	59%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	59%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	59%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	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	58%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	41%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average

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	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	25%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	25%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	44%	Close to average

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	45%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	62%	Below
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	46%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	58%	Below

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	46%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	25%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average

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	29%	68%	-39 pp
2024/25 (final)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	67%	-42 pp
2022/23 (final)	35%	66%	-31 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	45%	80%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	81%	-37 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	80%	-40 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	46%	78%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	78%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	78%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	77%	-32 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	46%	80%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	25%	81%	-56 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-24 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	55%	79%	-24 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)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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 (3 term)	18.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.9%	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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