

Mason Moor Primary School, Nursery & Sen Unit

Address: Helvellyn Road, Millbrook, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 4AS

Unique reference number (URN): 116263

Inspection report: 24 March 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.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children get an excellent start in the early years. Staff provide warm and attentive care that helps every child feel safe and that they belong. Adults build positive relationships with children, which helps them grow in confidence and independence. They teach children how to make healthy choices and support their emotional and physical development.

Leadership in early years is highly effective. Leaders maintain clear oversight and ensure consistency across the provision. Staff know the children extremely well. They identify needs quickly and adapt learning so every child can succeed. Language development is a key priority. Adults give focused support to the children who need extra help with communication.

The curriculum is ambitious and thoughtfully designed from nursery onwards. It is clearly communicated, giving staff confidence and a shared sense of purpose. Essential vocabulary is mapped carefully, and staff model high-quality language throughout the day. Reading is prioritised, and children in Reception show age-appropriate early reading skills. As a result, children acquire and use a wide range of vocabulary, which supports deeper understanding.

Disadvantaged children receive timely and successful support. Leaders make thoughtful decisions in the children's best interests. Partnerships with parents and carers are well established and support children with additional needs meaningfully. This helps staff extend children's learning from their starting points and ensures children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school's approach to inclusion is highly effective. Leaders have created a culture where every pupil is valued and supported. Families can access timely help and specialist guidance. Pupils receive support as soon as concerns arise. Staff identify needs early, including for children starting in nursery. They know pupils well and understand the barriers they may face. This helps them provide well-targeted support that strengthens pupils' engagement and confidence.

Leaders and governors are determined that the most vulnerable pupils succeed. Staff act quickly to help pupils feel they belong. They are well trained and confident in adapting teaching so pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those known to social care can learn alongside their peers. Speech and language support is a particular strength. Therapists work in school each week. Their advice helps pupils make progress in communication and language. The Ark and Pathways provisions offer tailored learning for pupils with complex needs. These nurturing settings help them develop essential skills and make connections with others. Leaders work closely with staff to set clear and effective targets for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders use additional funding for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds effectively. Staff understand their role in delivering this funding and adapting provision when needed.

Leaders monitor the impact of support and oversee any alternative provision with precision. This is an inclusive school where leaders and staff reduce barriers and raise aspirations so pupils can thrive.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders track attendance carefully and analyse patterns over time. They understand the school's context and the significant challenges some families face. Leaders act quickly when concerns arise. They use clear, structured steps to prevent persistent absence. Where required, they use formal processes to keep pupils safe and ensure they attend. Their personalised approaches are having a positive impact. Attendance is improving for most pupils, including those who face significant barriers. For example, pupils in the Pathways provision now attend far more regularly. As a result, overall attendance and persistent absence are improving over time.

Leaders have established clear routines that create a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Classrooms are orderly and pupils stay focused on their work. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently, low-level disruption is rare. Pupils who need additional support are helped to settle using practical strategies, enabling learning to continue without interruption. Breaktimes are respectful, and pupils know which adults to turn to if they need help. Bullying is not tolerated and is addressed promptly and effectively. Staff model kindness, and relationships are warm. Leaders use restorative approaches and respond quickly to any concerns.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge step by step from the early years to Year 6. They check the quality of teaching regularly and use this information to make sensible improvements. Leaders set clear expectations for assessment so teachers know what pupils should understand at each stage. This helps teachers check learning over time and identify where extra support is needed.

Staff receive regular training to strengthen subject knowledge. They know pupils well and adapt teaching to meet their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively to access the curriculum. The school prioritises reading, writing and mathematics. Phonics is taught consistently, and pupils who join mid-year or have gaps receive prompt catch-up support. Teachers emphasise vocabulary development and encourage pupils to apply new language when speaking and writing.

Leaders have made effective adaptations in mathematics to strengthen fluency and address historical gaps. Because many pupils join the school at different times, teachers revisit key number ideas regularly. These changes are suitable but still at an early stage, so the full impact is not yet seen. This means that some pupils still have gaps in their understanding.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked with determination to secure significant improvements. They understand the school's context well and identify the right priorities. Leaders operate seamlessly as a team, making well-considered decisions in pupils' best interests. They act as role models for staff. For example, they focus sharply on developing pupils' essential knowledge and check progress closely so that pupils receive timely support.

Leaders are committed to ongoing professional development. They prioritise the teaching of the curriculum to strengthen both provision and pupil outcomes. Because this work is at an early stage, its full impact is not yet reflected in published results. Staff value the wide-ranging training on offer. They have dedicated time to enhance their own knowledge and skills. Regular training strengthens classroom practice and helps staff support pupils with additional needs or notable gaps in learning. Staff are positive about the changes leaders and governors have introduced. As a result, they feel valued and united in a shared mission. Leaders also consider workload carefully when making decisions. Collaboration across the partnership enhances expertise, including curriculum development and specialist support for vulnerable pupils.

Knowledgeable and proactive governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Governors challenge leaders appropriately and act in the best interests of all pupils. They protect the school's inclusive ethos and maintain high expectations for every pupil. Governors recognise that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, must continue to improve. To support this, they are refining their use of data to evaluate impact more precisely and hold leaders to account.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a well-planned programme that supports pupils' personal development and emotional wellbeing. This programme continues to evolve and reflects the needs of pupils and the wider community. Pupils learn to value others and develop a clear sense of right and wrong. Leaders use the school's character heroes, part of the character curriculum, to help pupils understand themselves and those around them. For example, 'Mindful Mohammad' helps pupils explore mindfulness. They learn how their bodies react to different situations, which builds their mental resilience. Pastoral systems are well-established and responsive. Pupils say staff teach them how to manage worries and resolve problems effectively. They value the support they receive from dedicated staff.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, trips and activities that broaden their experiences and build their confidence. All clubs are free. Leaders monitor participation closely to ensure that every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils, can access the same opportunities. Activities such as art, cookery, sports and theatre visits help pupils discover new interests and understand the wider world.

Pupils feel welcome at school and say everyone is treated fairly. They learn to respect differences and understand that families come in many forms. Pupils show kindness and trust adults to listen when they have a concern. They know how to keep themselves safe online and offline and can explain risks linked to road, water and internet safety.

The school's relationship, sex and health education curriculum is age-appropriate and carefully considered. It helps pupils understand healthy relationships, respectful behaviour and positive choices. Pupils develop social skills, independence and resilience. Leadership roles such as school councillors and playground helpers allow pupils to contribute to school life and practise responsibility. Community projects, like working with local residents and the Saints Foundation, help pupils challenge stereotypes. They also promote understanding of equality and diversity.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not achieve well enough. By the end of key stage 2, their progress in writing and mathematics remains weaker than in reading. This pattern has persisted over time. Although children in early years make progress from low starting points, this momentum does not continue for all pupils as they move through the school. As a result, too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not secure the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' books show improvements in handwriting and spelling. Many pupils join the school mid-year with significant gaps in their learning. Leaders understand these challenges and are acting to strengthen knowledge and skills. For example, they have prioritised the teaching of basic mathematics to help more pupils access the curriculum. This work is at an early stage, and the full impact is not yet evident in national outcomes. Some pupils recall knowledge and vocabulary from the curriculum, but this recall is not consistent across subjects. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared for secondary school as they should be.

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

Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is a highly inclusive community where pupils speak warmly about their classmates and teachers. They describe the school as a welcoming place where everyone is accepted. Staff greet pupils at the door. They build strong, trusting relationships, which help pupils settle quickly and feel ready to learn. Well-established routines ensure that learning begins promptly and calmly.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They follow instructions, move sensibly and show respect for others. Social times are positive and typically harmonious. Pupils play together safely and use equipment responsibly. Adults model kindness and join in with activities, which strengthens relationships further. Pupils report that bullying is rare. They understand that it can happen but trust staff to act swiftly. They know which adults to speak to if they are worried.

Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly reading, which is a clear strength and passion of the school. They engage positively with lessons and value the routines that structure their day.

Many pupils join the school mid-year with significant gaps in their learning. Staff support pupils' well-being effectively so they feel secure and ready to learn. However, pupils do not yet achieve well enough across the curriculum. By the end of key stage 2, progress in writing and mathematics is weaker than in reading, and too many pupils do not secure the knowledge and skills they need for their next stage of education.

Leaders place pupils' wellbeing at the heart of the school's work. Pupils say they feel safe, happy and cared for. Parents and carers recognise the improvements the school has made and trust staff to support their children. Attendance is improving over time, and pupils' positive experiences of school support this. Leaders remain ambitious for every pupil's personal and academic success, but achievement outcomes are not yet where they need to be.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that recent curriculum and teaching changes are embedded consistently so that pupils' knowledge builds securely over time.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen teaching and support so that improvements in pupils' achievement are reflected in published outcomes.
 - Governors should continue to develop their oversight to hold leaders sharply to account for the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes.
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About this inspection

The chair of the governing body is Amanda Humby.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following Ofsted's 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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, head of school, deputy headteacher of inclusion and outreach support, and wider staff. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and school improvement officer. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as well as pupils. They also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspectors confirmed the following about the school:

The school is part of the St Mary's Partnership, a collective of 3 Southampton primary schools. It joined the partnership in September 2023. The school has a resourced provision, known as 'Pathways', for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The provision takes pupils from Southampton primary school settings, some of whom may be at

risk of permanent exclusion. The school also has a special educational needs unit, called 'The Ark'. Pupils attending the unit have an educational health and care plan, often for autism or moderate learning difficulty.

The school also, under the same registration, runs nursery provision for 2- and 3-year-olds.

The school makes use of 3 unregistered alternative provisions.

The school offers before-school and after-school provision.

Executive Headteacher: Daniel Constable-Phelps

Lead inspector:

Gareth Flemington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stuart Bevan, His Majesty's Inspector

Vickie Farrow, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

208

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

240

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)

59.80%

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

9.13%

Well above 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

20.19%

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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	28%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	19%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	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	69%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	48%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average

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	55%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	35%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	64%	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	32%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	23%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	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	22%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	14%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	0%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	71%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	52%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	89%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	49%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	25%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	14%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	0%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	22%	68%	-45 pp
2024/25 (revised)	14%	69%	-55 pp
2023/24 (final)	0%	67%	-67 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	66%	-21 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	71%	80%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	89%	80%	9 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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	49%	78%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	78%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	58%	77%	-19 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	25%	80%	-54 pp
2024/25 (revised)	14%	81%	-66 pp
2023/24 (final)	0%	79%	-79 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 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)	9.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.8%	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 (2 term)	32.3%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	31.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.4%	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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