

Central Primary School

Address: Derby Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 2LX

Unique reference number (URN): 117156

Inspection report: 24 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.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

When pupils join the school, staff follow clear steps to understand each pupil's needs. Leaders ensure that learning is routinely and consistently adapted to meet pupils' needs. Where pupils need extra help, leaders put the right teaching or support in place, so that pupils catch up quickly. The school uses a broad range of strategies that meet the needs of many different pupils.

Staff check pupils' progress when they receive extra teaching. These checks help leaders know whether pupils are getting the right provision and whether it is making a positive difference. For example, leaders review whether support for emotional wellbeing is helping pupils to take part in lessons with more confidence.

The school's 'hub' supports some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Skilled staff and highly effective plans help to close gaps in learning. Across the school, staff provide highly effective teaching for pupils with SEND so they can keep up with their peers.

Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used very well. The targeted support it provides makes a clear difference to pupils' wellbeing and how well they learn.

Leaders go beyond what is expected to meet pupils' needs and build supportive relationships with families. For example, they provide translation services and help with wider issues by offering families effective support and guidance, creating a strong holistic approach.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development programme is well organised from Nursery through to Year 6. Pupils revisit key ideas as they move through the school. They explain how their understanding deepens as they grow older. Leaders adapt the programme so new pupils do not miss important learning. They make sure pupils learn about many cultures, countries and religions. Pupils speak with pride about their school, saying it welcomes new pupils and values the many different languages spoken by families. Displays, books and the use of home languages in lessons help pupils to feel included.

The school teaches pupils how to build positive relationships. Pupils learn about consent and the changes they will experience as they grow. Relationships between pupils are respectful. Leaders work openly with parents, helping them understand the relationships and health education programme. They explain what must be taught and take time to answer questions. Workshops and shared lesson materials help families feel confident and involved.

Half-term themes help pupils understand important ideas, such as fundamental British values. For example, some pupils performed a rap to share these values with others. The curriculum is also further enriched by themed days, community events and an annual careers day.

Pastoral support is a real strength. Staff identify pupils' emotional needs quickly. They provide a wide range of support, such as small-group sessions and activities that help pupils feel calm and ready to learn. Pupils speak positively about this support. They learn to be confident and develop strategies that support positive mental health.

Leaders check pupils' personal development thoroughly. They frequently listen to pupils and act on what they say. Many pupils take part in a wide variety of clubs, trips and events, which broaden their experiences and raise their aspirations. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. This prepares pupils very well for their next educational stage.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils make steady progress as they move through the curriculum. Their work shows clear improvement over time, for example in their writing skills from year to year. Many pupils start with limited English, but they catch up well because staff give them the support they need. Pupils who join the school mid-year progress securely from their various starting points.

The school's recent national test results show that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve in line with pupils nationally. This reflects the school's focus on early reading, language and number skills. Teachers check pupils' learning often and use this information to fill gaps quickly, which helps pupils keep up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Staff understand their needs and make sensible adjustments so they can take part in lessons and succeed. Pupils learn how to work independently and take responsibility for their learning. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor attendance closely and act quickly when it falls. They work with families to understand why some pupils are absent and offer support when needed. For example, families may receive family support guidance or additional help from wider services that the school provides. These actions have had a clear impact. Attendance is now broadly in line with national averages and has improved over time.

Pupils behave well. Leaders have created a calm and orderly environment. Staff model the behaviour they expect. They respond promptly to any discrimination, harassment, harmful language or online issues. Consequently, the numbers of such incidents have reduced. Staff record any behaviour concerns so they can identify any patterns. They also provide appropriate support for pupils who find it harder to manage their behaviour.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They enjoy spending time with friends. At social times, pupils generally get along well.

Bullying is rare. Pupils trust adults to deal with it should it occur. Pupils understand the school rules and follow them. As a result, behaviour improves over time, shown by the reduction in suspensions. The school is a community where pupils feel cared for, included and ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It has been designed to meet the pupils' needs. For example, some topics include studying pupils' home countries.

The curriculum is well sequenced in each subject so that staff understand what pupils should learn and when. Leaders make sure teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach subjects effectively. Training is regular and effective. As a result, teaching is typically secure and pupils gain the knowledge they need for their next steps.

Reading, writing and mathematics are priorities. Pupils who need to catch up receive effective support. Staff understand pupils' needs, including those who face extra challenges. They make sensible adjustments so all pupils can learn alongside their peers. Support staff help pupils to keep up.

Staff teach phonics in a structured way and reading books match pupils' reading abilities. This helps pupils become confident readers. In mathematics, teachers explain ideas clearly and pupils have time to consolidate their understanding. In most lessons, staff help pupils use the right vocabulary so they can explain their thinking.

Leaders continue to improve the pupils' standards in writing. This work is ongoing and includes strengthening handwriting, spelling and grammar.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is well planned and gives children many chances to develop their communication and language skills. Staff talk with children often and model new words in simple, clear ways. This helps children build their vocabulary. Children enjoy daily story times and learn songs and rhymes that further develop their understanding. This early focus on language helps children understand new ideas and take part in lessons with confidence as they move through school. However, sometimes staff do not use consistent and effective approaches, for example by weaving language development into routines and activities across the day.

In the Reception Year, phonics begins straight away. Children learn the sounds they need to read and write simple words. Books match the sounds they know, so they are successful when practising. Most children achieve well from their different starting points. Children are generally well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Provision for 3-year-olds meets their needs well. Staff help them settle and build early communication skills. In the Reception Year, staff teach routines early so children become confident and independent.

Partnership with parents and carers is effective. Staff visit families before children join the school, which helps to identify any additional needs pupils may have. As a result, families feel understood and included.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's strengths and set clear priorities for improvement. Their work on inclusion shows this well. Many pupils face challenges. Some do not speak English when they arrive, others come from unstable or war-torn countries. Some pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has high mobility, with many pupils joining at different points in the year. Leaders respond to these challenges quickly. They identify pupils' needs as soon as they arrive and remove barriers to learning. The school is highly effective in this work.

Governors represent the community well. This helps them understand the school and build strong links with families. They carry out their statutory duties, including making sure staff are recruited safely. Governors also challenge leaders when aspects of the school's work need refinement.

Parents and carers are generally positive about the school. They feel that teachers and leaders put pupils' needs first.

Early career teachers settle well because leaders support them closely. As a result, they gain confidence and develop their skills, especially in managing behaviour, working with pupils and supporting learning. Other staff value the effective training that develops them professionally. They also appreciate that leaders and governors consider their workload and wellbeing.

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

Pupils describe their school as a diverse community. They say this makes it a special place to learn. Pupils feel everyone is treated fairly and this is important to them. They learn about their own cultures and languages, as well as those of others. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils and staff have positive, respectful relationships. Pupils know adults will support them when they need help, so they feel safe. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, pupils are confident that staff deal with it effectively.

Many pupils join the school at different times, not only in the Reception Year. They are warmly welcomed, which helps new pupils to settle quickly. Overall, pupils achieve well. Some progress rapidly from their various starting points. For example, pupils who are new to speaking English learn to read and write it through a well planned and effective approach.

Staff check pupils' progress carefully. For example, they notice when a pupil needs extra help in mathematics or support to build their confidence. Pupils learn what they need to do to improve. This helps them take ownership of their learning and gives them a clear sense of

their next steps. Pupils say someone is always available to help them if they need it. They find this reassuring.

The youngest children in the school play happily together and know the routines well. For example, they know how to collect the resources they need for a task, which builds important independent skills. Across the school, pupils typically behave well. They understand the rules because staff apply them fairly.

Pupils learn a wide range of knowledge that matches their needs. For example, they think about careers they may want in the future. They also develop their talents and interests, such as learning a musical instrument. This work prepares them well for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should further strengthen early years teaching so that staff use consistent and effective approaches in order for more children to achieve well by the end of the Reception Year.
 - Leaders should improve the teaching of writing and raise expectations so that pupils attain more highly.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors are Solomon Brown and Cheryl Clark.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body including the co-chairs of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sabriye Wright

Lead inspector:

Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lynda Walker, Ofsted Inspector

Ania Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector

Laura Hower, 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 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

411

Above 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

450

Above 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)

22.92%

Close to 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

3.41%

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

16.06%

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

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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	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%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	81%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	40%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	36%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	60%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	57%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
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	40%	68%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-28 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	80%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	78%	-24 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	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	78%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	77%	-31 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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.4%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	15.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.5%	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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