

Hornsea Nursery School

Address: Willows Drive, Hornsea, HU18 1DA

Unique reference number (URN): 117699

Inspection report: 3 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.

Exceptional

Inclusion

Exceptional 

Leaders' meticulous insight into child development has enabled them to design a highly effective approach to inclusion. This approach precisely meets children's needs. Leaders quickly recognise when children need extra help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and those known to social care.

Leaders quickly and accurately identify children's needs, particularly those who need specific support for their physical development and/or their emotional development. Support plans outline the specific targets, provision and resources that enable children to access the full curriculum. This is impressively tailored to individual children so that they make sustained progress across the different areas of learning from their varied starting points.

Leaders guide expert staff to adopt deliberate high-quality teaching approaches that support children's physical, social and emotional development. For example, staff teach children how to regulate their behaviour so that they can join in learning with confidence. Staff provide structured support in everyday activities. They track children's progress meticulously to ensure that the provision continues to be effective for each and every child. Leaders make excellent use of the early years pupil premium funding to reduce the barriers to learning that disadvantaged children may face. This also includes broadening children's understanding of the world around them.

Leaders make purposeful use of external support to provide expert guidance and training for staff and parents and carers. This enables staff to quickly and confidently respond to children's changing needs. Parents support their children at home with a secure understanding of the strategies that support their needs.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Children achieve highly across the 7 areas of learning. They develop secure foundational knowledge that they need for future learning. Disadvantaged children achieve well. They progress very well through the curriculum and make strong gains in their learning, especially in communication and language.

Children's physical development is a key priority. Children are active in their learning. In the outdoor area, they develop confidence and safety awareness. They develop physically through climbing and digging. Children learn to use early vocabulary to express their feelings. They remember and follow simple, then more complex, instructions. They initiate and take turns in conversations. Children develop early listening and attention skills. Younger children focus on staff's use of language and repeat it. Children develop their emotional understanding and learn to care for themselves and others.

Children persevere and concentrate for long periods of time. They work together confidently and solve problems. In phonics sessions, children listen to and repeat sounds and build early language. They are well prepared for the Reception Year.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders raise awareness of attendance with parents and carers. They talk to parents about the importance of early education. The school makes the expectations for regular attendance clear to parents. There is an open-door culture where parents meet with school staff for support.

Leaders analyse attendance information and remove barriers to attendance by addressing parents' anxiety and worries. Leaders act quickly to support families where children's absence becomes a concern. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and those with medical needs. Attendance rates have improved for these children. This has had a positive impact on children's achievement.

Pupils' behaviour is taught through clear, consistent expectations that are modelled to children every day. Children behave calmly and confidently because routines are clear and predictable. They settle quickly, cooperate with others and stay focused in their play. Staff support children's behaviour with consistent language, teaching about emotions and giving simple choices. When children become upset, staff respond quickly with calm reassurance so children re-engage positively. Staff receive training that builds their confidence to use strategies that support children when they are unsettled.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

The school's inclusive approach has shaped the curriculum to meet children's differing needs. This is complemented well by targeted support that is focused on overcoming children's barriers to learning.

The curriculum is highly ambitious. It has been deliberately designed to build and embed early learning in writing, reading, mathematics and communication. For example, early writing is taught through a structured approach that begins with sensory approaches and activities to develop hand and body control. The teaching of phonics is purposeful and effective. Promoting children's physical development is also a key aspect of the curriculum offer.

Leaders ensure that teaching is purposeful and focused. Staff design activities that are matched to children's starting points and developmental needs. Teachers repeat and revisit key routines and activities so that children's knowledge builds effectively. Staff use clear language, model thinking and adapt tasks so that all children take part. Children work cooperatively on meaningful and engaging tasks. Staff link activities to aspirations. For example, children built a model of the Humber Bridge, which helps them to think like engineers.

The school's assessment strategy follows a 5-step pathway. Staff build on and embed previous learning through their continuous checks on learning and progress. They identify

next steps early so that support can be targeted where it is needed. Staff use high-quality interactions and precise language to move children's learning on in the moment.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are forward-facing advocates for early years education. Leaders and staff are involved in research and development. They are committed to their own professional development. Leaders have developed a highly effective approach to inclusion, which governors embrace. Together, they have ensured that the curriculum is developed in the best interests of children.

Leaders at all levels ensure that research-informed developments are carefully considered before they are introduced. Leaders make decisions that focus on children's development, and when this is not typical, they provide focused support so children access the full curriculum.

Governors understand and develop the school's strategic direction through regular meetings. They have regular opportunities to explore new approaches that have been implemented with the children. They collaborate with other governing bodies and learn together from senior leaders. Governors have secure and detailed knowledge of the school. This enables them to support and challenge leaders effectively.

Staff feel well supported. They value leaders' focus on wellbeing and reducing workload. They appreciate the high-quality training and the family-like team culture. Staff receive an extensive programme of professional development to ensure that they meet the needs of children. This builds staff's confidence in the use of effective strategies to help children belong and thrive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders make deliberate choices about the best activities to support children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED). Leaders provide children with a broad and balanced set of experiences to develop their interests and curiosity about the world. Children learn about fundamental British values in an age-appropriate way. They have access to rich and varied opportunities that build their confidence, resilience and independence. Ambitious tasks, such as woodwork, clay, dance and early engineering, develop children's interests and foster their excitement in learning. Enrichment activities, such as orchestra sessions and Lego Masters, broaden children's understanding of the world. Parents and carers are helped to support their children at home with 'borrow me bags'.

Children learn about personal care and develop an awareness of their bodies. They build independence by practising dressing, toileting, handwashing and choosing healthy foods. Children access high-quality experiences such as yoga, music and art. Leaders plan meaningful activities in the local community to develop children's emotional understanding, including 'random acts of kindness'. They use the local area as a teaching opportunity to develop children's sense of belonging. This includes visits to the beach, library and wind turbines. Staff extend children's understanding of the world through virtual experiences by comparing other places to the local area.

Children take part in projects that build their problem-solving skills and help them to make decisions. Children explore diversity and difference through links with children from another school. They are involved in charity work with purpose. Leaders promote the language around consent, positive relationships and emotional wellbeing, helping children understand themselves and others.

Staff prioritise children's PSED, particularly for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to learning. They make adaptations for children through family group time, activities in provision, use of language, wellbeing support and involvement with parents and carers. Children develop resilience, independence and self-regulation through experiences that are repeated and embedded. This prepares them well for their future.

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

Children flourish and thrive at this inspirational setting. Right from their first day in the school, children are immersed in a caring and nurturing environment. They are supported by warm, positive and trusting relationships with compassionate staff. This helps children to settle quickly and feel safe. Children know that staff will deal with any incidents of unkindness, including bullying.

Leaders have meticulously designed every part of the school day to ensure it is adapted to meet children's needs. Staff explicitly teach routines and ensure that they are part of every child's learning experience, including toileting and eating.

Staff speak gently and sensitively to children. This helps them to understand and manage their emotions. Staff identify children's needs quickly, and they have a deep insight into children's backgrounds and interests. They make sure that everyone is involved in the rich early years offer. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). If they need it, children have dedicated time for sensory exploration. Activities such as the indoor sandpit offer sensory experiences that help children regulate and feel calm.

Children quickly learn to follow rules and stay safe. They engage deeply and enthusiastically with the purposeful learning activities. Children with SEND, disadvantaged children and those who are known to social care succeed with the right, targeted support. Children are immersed in songs and rhymes from the beginning of the day. They are immersed in wellbeing activities that teach them to be kind and look after themselves and each other. This ensures that children are ready for life in modern Britain.

Children are happy and settled. In the outdoor area, even in cold and wet weather, they take part confidently in a range of engaging activities, including woodwork and the mud kitchen. Children quickly learn to be independent and follow well-established routines. They move freely and access their learning without adult direction. Staff use their interactions and careful questioning to extend children's thinking.

Parents and carers value the support that their children receive to help them thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure the school's approach to child development responds to future challenges and changing cohorts so that children continue to achieve the best possible outcomes and are well prepared for their next steps.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Cllr John Whittle.

The school is part of an informal collaboration with 3 other maintained nursery schools.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the school business manager during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school also, under the same registration, runs provision for 2-year-olds and before- and after-school care.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Claire White

Lead inspector:

Nicola Beaumont, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Alison Ashworth, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

79

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

0.0%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.13%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

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.

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

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