

Kirby Hill Church of England (VC) Primary School

Address: Kirby Hill, Boroughbridge, York, North Yorkshire, YO51 9DS

Unique reference number (URN): 121504

Inspection report: 21 April 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 ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development programme is extremely well established. It consistently develops pupils' character and a secure sense of belonging within the school and the local community. Pupils develop a detailed understanding of fundamental British values, healthy lifestyles and respectful relationships. They learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. They learn about the risks they may face as they get older, such as substance misuse. Pupils are respectful of different faiths and cultures and appreciate a range of viewpoints. Carefully planned activities enrich this knowledge. For example, pupils study diverse role models and visit a mosque. Pupils also develop an understanding of first aid, careers and financial awareness. Through the 'junior business challenge' they make purposeful decisions and choose which charity receives the profits.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, are proud to contribute to school life. They take on an impressive range of leadership roles including school councillors, eco leaders, fair-trade leaders and wellbeing warriors. These roles are deeply embedded and carried out responsibly. Pupils lead weekly celebration assemblies, support the preparation and delivery of daily collective worship, manage house points and organise whole-school projects such as the collective London Marathon challenge. They run a weekly fairtrade stall and donate proceeds to charity. Pupils' engagement with the local community is highly effective. For example, a letter written to the parish council resulted in more trees being planted. Music and performance are also embedded, with pupils taking part in choirs and competitions. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument and perform during the school year.

Leaders check pupils' engagement to ensure that no one misses out. Pupils know their opinions matter and leaders act on their views. Opportunities are added to the programme following pupil voice. This includes new clubs such as YouTube club and 'DJ tigers'. Pupils thrive because of the high-quality support they receive. Precise pastoral support, including emotional support, reduces pupils' barriers to learning and wellbeing. The recently established 'rainbow room' is a safe and purposeful space where pupils talk to trusted staff.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils typically achieve well over time with most outcomes being at or above national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils learn the intended curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, achieve well from their different starting points. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and explain their learning with increasing confidence.

Most pupils develop secure basic knowledge and skills in English and mathematics that enables them to access the wider curriculum successfully. Pupils typically write fluently and read with increasing fluency at an age-appropriate level. Handwriting is generally neat and accurately formed although some pupils from Year 2 onwards have developed less effective habits. For these pupils, minor misconceptions in spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are not picked up and addressed in lessons. Although the most recent phonics outcomes were lower than leaders expected, targeted support ensures that these pupils make secure progress. Pupils, right from the early years, are well prepared for their next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance rates are high and have been for some time. Pupils typically arrive at school on time and are ready to learn. Leaders build positive relationships with families and regularly reinforce the importance of high attendance. Leaders and staff work closely with families particularly where pupils have previously been reluctant to attend. Personalised strategies and adaptations have improved routines and pupils' confidence to attend. This has led to clear examples of improved attendance for individual pupils.

Behaviour across the school is generally positive. Staff use consistent language. This helps pupils to respond quickly to the school's high expectations. Pupils, right from the early years, follow well-established routines confidently and independently. They settle quickly to learning and show respectful attitudes towards staff and each other. At social times, pupils of all ages play sensibly together. They seek support from staff when needed. Where behaviour dips below what is expected, staff ensure pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, understand how their behaviour has impacted on others and how it can be improved in the future. Where additional support is needed, adaptations and targeted interventions are successful in restoring expected behaviour. Bullying and discrimination are rare and dealt with promptly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is ambitious and carefully designed to ensure that it sets out the key knowledge that pupils need to learn in the mixed-age classes. Well-sequenced lessons build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils are given time to practise and embed their knowledge. They revisit previous learning in lessons before new knowledge is introduced. Teachers ensure pupils develop and practise the knowledge and skills they need for future learning. For example, morning tasks give pupils a chance to practise basic skills in English and mathematics such as handwriting, sentence writing and arithmetic. These increase in complexity for older pupils. Older pupils access some of this learning independently as they know what they need to do next to develop their knowledge.

The curriculum is generally taught well. Staff have secure subject knowledge. They give pupils clear examples of how to develop their knowledge so pupils learn with increasing independence. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils. They use targeted adaptations to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to learning successfully learn alongside their peers.

Leaders, including subject leaders, have the expertise to ensure that the curriculum continues to develop. They have identified the right areas to focus on including spelling, grammar and punctuation. Phonics is a priority. Staff support reading well. Pupils who need support are quickly identified and receive targeted support to catch up.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is ambitious and well thought out. Leaders prioritise language development and identify key vocabulary. Staff engage well with children to teach them new words and show them how to speak correctly. Children use taught vocabulary accurately in their play and conversations. They develop the knowledge and skills needed for later learning particularly in early reading, writing and mathematics. There are many opportunities for early writing, including name writing and opportunities to embed their phonic knowledge by writing simple sentences. The school's 'mathematics champion programme' supports children's early mathematical development. Staff accurately identify children's starting points. They regularly check children's understanding and ensure that next steps are identified so that children achieve well. However, on occasions, staff do not always connect and extend children's learning to deepen their understanding.

Staff know children as individuals. They create a warm, nurturing environment where children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, are safe and ready to learn. Children's welfare needs are met and the youngest children are well cared for. Children follow routines confidently and respond well to staff. They settle quickly and engage well in group activities. Carefully designed activities develop children's curiosity. For example, when observing caterpillars, children accurately use the associated scientific vocabulary including cocoon and butterfly. Children use resources purposefully and independently. They play cooperatively and have positive relationships with each other.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is prioritised. Leaders ensure pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, are quickly and accurately identified. Support is put in place promptly. Leaders' expertise in SEND shapes a research-led approach. Clear systems and processes, that include the targeted use of additional funding, ensure staff have access to information and regular training. This ensures that staff are confident to reduce pupils' barriers to learning, including for pupils who are disadvantaged, so they achieve well. Pupils have precise and ambitious targets that enable them to progress both academically and socially. Leaders regularly review the support to ensure that it is tailored specifically to pupils' needs.

Pupils who need support are warmly welcomed into school by familiar adults. Staff respond quickly and skilfully when pupils need support to manage their emotions. They use calm, supportive strategies to help pupils express how they feel and re-engage in their learning. Pupils with SEND, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care are given meaningful roles and opportunities to engage in school life and the community.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They notice when a pupil's circumstances change and follow this up sensitively. Parents and carers are supported to engage with the school, for example, through 'coffee and catch-up' sessions. Parents of pupils with SEND speak highly of the support their children receive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, to achieve well. They lead with care and kindness.

Leaders are outward facing and seek continuous improvement. Leaders quickly identify priorities through accurate self-evaluation. They put the right actions in place to bring about improvement. They prioritise inclusion. The vision for inclusion has strengthened provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders have developed secure systems and processes to identify, check and review support to meet pupils' needs. Leaders access research and join external projects to collaborate with other schools and professionals to ensure continuous improvement in areas such as writing and early mathematics.

Governors understand their strategic responsibilities and the school's strengths, priorities and next steps. Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders including the deployment of staff and resources. They have a well-structured approach to check what is happening in school, for example, they check data and seek external support and advice. Leaders and governors work closely with the local authority and the diocese who also have an oversight of the school's work including safeguarding, behaviour and inclusion.

Leaders are visible, approachable and proactive. Leaders listen to staff views, act quickly to respond to concerns. Leaders are positive role models for staff and pupils. They exemplify the school's values. Staff feel valued. They welcome the professional learning opportunities which gives them confidence in their roles. Staff workload is managed effectively and wellbeing is supported. Leaders maintain positive, trusting relationships with families. Parents and carers are positive about the school's caring ethos.

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

Pupils are warmly welcomed to this community-focused school where they feel valued from the moment they arrive. Staff greet pupils each morning. This helps create a calm and safe start to the day. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They are positive about their learning and value their friendships with each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and supportive. This reflects the school's commitment to inclusion. Pupils are known as individuals. They know that they can talk to staff if they are worried.

From the early years onwards, pupils benefit from a well-structured curriculum that helps them develop socially and academically. Leaders have high expectations of pupils to achieve well from their different starting points. Pupils live out the school's vision of 'if you can believe it, you can achieve it'. As pupils move through school, they continue to build knowledge securely and take pride in their progress. Pupils show positive attitudes to

learning and respond well to staff in lessons. Behaviour is calm and orderly. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils are well supported through the school's aspirational personal development offer. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities and experiences that are consistently embedded across school life. They develop an impressive understanding of the wider world and life beyond school. For example, pupils enjoy partnerships with other schools, such as a school in Peru and pupils in an inner-city school. This helps them to learn about similarities and differences. Older pupils learn to speak French and practise their linguistic skills during an annual visit to France with another local school.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known or previously known to social care, succeed because barriers to learning and wellbeing are reduced through targeted support and well-trained staff. Pupils are socially confident, speak maturely and show a secure sense of belonging within this close-knit school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that high-quality teaching consistently develops pupils' phonics knowledge and writing knowledge for Year 2 pupils onwards so that they access the wider curriculum and achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years consistently maximise opportunities to engage children in high-quality interactions throughout the day so that children develop a broad vocabulary and a detailed understanding across the 7 areas of learning and development.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors is David Orr.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, some subject leaders and the early years leader. They met with members of the board of governors including the chair of governors, senior education advisor from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character within the Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character

took place in March 2023.

The headteacher and special educational needs coordinator are new to their roles since the last inspection.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Miss Lisa Welburn

Lead inspector:

Nicola Beaumont, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Kathryn McDonald, His Majesty's 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

120

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

150

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)

12.50%

Below 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

1.67%

Below 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

13.33%

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

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	73%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	60%	Above

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	89%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	73%	Above

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	80%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	71%	Above

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	89%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	73%	Above

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	57%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	86%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	57%	68%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	71%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	86%	80%	6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.0%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	5.9%	Below

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)	7.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.5%	16.2%	Below

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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