

Kielder Primary School and Nursery

Address: Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1HQ

Unique reference number (URN): 122233

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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

The school's published attendance data fluctuates widely over time due to the very small cohorts of statutory school-age pupils. Leaders ensure that parents, carers, pupils and staff know the value of regular attendance. Leaders work well with pupils' families to overcome any barriers to their children's regular attendance. Overall, pupils attend the school very regularly and punctually. Currently, almost all pupils have attendance of over 98%. In addition, every pupil's attendance percentage has improved from this time last year.

Pupils behave very well. They understand the school's behaviour rewards and consequences. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They travel around the school in an orderly manner. Their behaviour during the less-structured times of the school day, in the playground for example, is exemplary. They organise their own games and entice the adults to join in too. Pupils are very polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. They understand and can explain the repeated actions that constitute bullying. Pupils say, and the school's records confirm, that there is no bullying in school. Leaders have ensured that Kielder Primary School and Nursery is a place of learning at which discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils demonstrate a very secure knowledge and understanding of their learning in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships education. The school's new 'Thrive and Excel @ Kielder' framework underpins the PHSE curriculum extremely well. The framework's 6 domains support pupils' development into confident, resilient and independent individuals. Pupils are highly respectful of other people's individual differences. Pupils discuss sensitive topics with enthusiasm and maturity. They have a deep understanding of the rule of law. Their learning about different cultures, faiths and religions is very well developed through face-to-face work with an inner-city school in England and online work with pupils at a large international school in Bahrain.

Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care, access a broad and purposeful range of educational opportunities. They experience a wide variety of music, arts, culture and sport. Pupils, with a local artist, created a beautiful mosaic table linked to the 'Sycamore Gap' tree. They, with a local musician, helped to create a joyful school song. These activities enhance pupils' artistic and cultural understanding exceedingly well. Staff ensure that curriculum-linked visits to museums, arts venues and historic buildings broaden pupils' cultural experience. Pupils access activities such as golf, gymnastics and tag rugby through the government's School Sports Partnership programme.

Pupils carry out roles of responsibility, such as being school councillors or members of the eco team, very well. Staff's pastoral support for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care, is a strength of the school. Staff know all pupils and their families well.

Pupils have overwhelmingly positive relationships with each other and with staff. These relationships are a true reflection of the school's ethos and culture.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have implemented a curriculum in the early years which meets the needs of the children increasingly well. Leaders' plans to improve the provision are well thought through. The plans include the further development of the school's provision for children's literacy and numeracy.

Children experience a well-structured and nurturing start to school life. Interactions between staff and children are purposeful. Staff develop children's language and communication well through high-quality speaking and listening. Meaningful conversations extend children's thinking. Staff have a sharp and deliberate focus on children's social and emotional development. Children share their feelings fully with their trusted adults in the setting.

Communication between school and home happens daily. Staff know the children and their families exceptionally well. They respond sensitively to children's individual needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and children known or previously known to social care have their individual needs met well. The depth of staff's knowledge of each individual child ensures that all make progress from their starting points. Children are prepared well for the next stage of their education in key stage 1. Parents appreciate the staff's efforts on behalf of their children.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is at the centre of this small school's work. Staff work closely with pupils' families, other professionals and external agencies to identify the needs of individual pupils. Leaders put appropriate support in place quickly to overcome any identified barriers to pupils' learning and progress. Intervention activities, for example in early reading, are well established, purposeful and delivered effectively. When necessary, staff receive additional training to provide for pupils' individual needs. The school's culture of targeted and bespoke support promotes pupils' confidence, independence and progress.

The school uses pupil premium funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils take part in the full range of educational experiences the school provides. This year, leaders have used the funding to purchase additional phonics resources, to partly finance educational visits and to provide online coaching. Leaders evaluate the impact of this funding on pupils' progress as the academic year progresses.

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care, are fully included in all aspects of school life at Kielder Primary School and Nursery. They thrive in small, mixed-age classes and receive individualised teaching and support.

Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and areas that need further development accurately. Their evaluation takes the school's unique context into account. Some of the school's improvement actions, for example in relation to early reading and oracy, have led to significant improvements in pupils' outcomes. Quite correctly, the school's current improvement plans include the further development of pupils' writing. Leaders give staff's training and development very high priority. Staff, including early career teachers and teaching assistants, appreciate their access to high-quality online training from the school's remote location.

Leaders have developed constructive and positive relationships with all parents and carers in this small community. Parents speak extremely positively about the school, the staff and its provision. Leaders have developed a cohesive staff team. Staff morale is very high. The 6 staff in school support each other well.

Governors support the school and its staff well. They visit the school regularly to check on staff's wellbeing and workload. On occasion, when staffing resources are stretched, members of the governing body negotiate support from other schools in the North Tyne Schools Alliance. Governors make visits to the school to check on specific aspects of the school's work, such as the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their evaluations do not identify the school's strengths and areas that require further development with sufficient rigour. Governors check on the success of the school's pupil premium strategy regularly. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, including those to safeguard pupils, well.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Children make a secure start to their education in the early years. They are prepared well to meet the demands of the curriculum in key stage 1.

Pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning, do not achieve well enough in writing. Pupils' oracy is developed well across the school. Verbally, they express themselves clearly and fluently. Reading is a strength of the school's provision. Since the previous inspection, all Year 1 pupils have achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils read with understanding, fluency and expression. Pupils use their knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables to make sound progress in mathematics from their individual starting points.

Across the wider curriculum, in subjects such as religious education and history, pupils usually remember what they have learned. For example, pupils in key stage 1 recall the messages from the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' fully.

Since the last inspection, leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading and the teaching of speaking and listening skills, known as oracy. Staff teach phonics and other reading strategies well across all key stages. While leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of reading across the school, the teaching of writing is lagging behind. In writing, staff do not use their knowledge of pupils' starting points to identify and address gaps in pupils' basic skills quickly enough. Generally, pupils' letters are not formed, sized and placed correctly. They do not spell common words such as 'said' and 'where' accurately as a matter of course. Pupils use simple punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops, accurately. Their use of other punctuation, such as commas, exclamation marks and question marks, is inconsistent.

Staff develop pupils' knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables well. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to solve mathematical problems, record their calculations and explain their reasoning.

Leaders implemented a new curriculum for the foundation subjects, such as history and music, at the beginning of the academic year. Although not fully embedded, this curriculum is beginning to address the learning needs of the pupils in the school's small, mixed-age classes well.

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

Pupils and their families receive a very warm welcome from staff at this small and rural village school. On entry, children settle quickly into the routines of the early years. They play and learn with, and alongside, their friends happily. They enjoy eating lunch with the older pupils in the school's dining room. Pupils have secure relationships with their peers and with the adults who work with them. The school is a harmonious place of learning. Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils enjoy learning in the classroom and outdoors. They benefit from online lessons with pupils at an international school in Bahrain. Their understanding of diversity, citizenship, culture and global issues is developed well. Generally, pupils develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum well. Their progress in writing is lagging behind their progress in other subjects. Pupils who face barriers to their learning, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, receive individual support to make progress. All pupils are proud of the rapid progress they make to become fluent readers. Pupils enjoy reading. They are increasingly well prepared for their next stages in their education.

Pupils feel secure and are nurtured in school. Pupils, who all live close to the country's largest man-made reservoir, have regular swimming lessons and water safety sessions. In this geographically remote location, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school, in the community and when using the internet for homework and entertainment. They behave extremely well in and around school. They care for each other well. They are polite and

respectful to each other and to staff. Pupils give visitors, be they musicians, authors or inspectors, a warm, respectful and curious welcome.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that the curriculum for writing, and how it is taught, supports pupils to achieve consistently well in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils are given more regular opportunities to use their knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables to solve challenging mathematics problems while recording their calculations fully.
 - Children in the early years should be given more opportunities to develop their foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Pass.

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, 2 early career teachers, 2 teaching assistants, the vice-chair of governors and another governor, the school's improvement partner and Northumberland local authority's head of school improvement.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new chair of governors was appointed in the summer term of 2026.

Headteacher: Lee Williscroft-Ferris

Lead inspector:

Belita Scott, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspector:

Kathryn Fenwick, 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

11

Well 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

75

Well 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)

27.27%

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

0.00%

Well 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

18.18%

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		61%	
2024/25		62%	
2023/24 (final)	S	61%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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		74%	
2024/25		75%	
2023/24 (final)	S	74%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	S

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		72%	
2024/25		72%	
2023/24 (final)	S	72%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	71%	S

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		73%	
2024/25		74%	
2023/24 (final)	S	73%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	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

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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
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		62%	
2024/25		63%	
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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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		78%	
2024/25		78%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
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 (3 term)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	4.0%	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 (3 term)	11.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	30.0%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	0.0%	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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