

# Orchard Primary School and Nursery

**Address:** Chapel Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG17 8JY

**Unique reference number (URN):** 122722

## Inspection report: 2 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.

## Expected standard

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Rates of pupils' attendance are average overall. Leaders recently raised their ambition and strengthened their strategies for promoting pupils' attendance. This has led to a reduction in absence rates, especially for disadvantaged pupils which were higher than national averages. Leaders monitor pupils' absence closely and work with families when it becomes a concern. While leaders have high expectations, they sensitively find out the barriers for families and offer helpful support. Strategies such as emotional support on arrival or places in the breakfast club, help pupils feel more settled before learning begins.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is generally positive. Pupils understand the expectations and consider the school's values carefully. They follow routines with great independence, such as when they are organising their belongings. Pupils try hard and work well with talk partners in lessons. Pupils play cooperatively at playtimes, showing caring and respectful attitudes towards one another. Staff teach pupils to manage their emotions and stand up for themselves respectfully, without hurting anyone. As a result, unkindness, bullying or discriminatory behaviour are very rare. On these rare occasions, staff resolve matters fairly. Staff adapt the school's approaches sensitively and effectively for pupils with barriers to managing their behaviour when necessary.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The suitably ambitious curriculum clearly sets out the knowledge pupils will learn in all subjects. Overall, it is designed well for pupils to secure this knowledge over time. Reading is at the forefront, and phonics teaching is effective. Leaders successfully introduced a new writing curriculum recently by ensuring staff develop the right expertise to deliver it effectively. Staff model the stages of writing effectively, alongside ensuring pupils understand grammatical concepts.

More recently, in response to declining achievement, leaders began to review the teaching of mathematics. Initial changes have impacted positively to ensure this is effective overall. Leaders are still developing mathematics teaching and embedding improvements. Sometimes, teachers do not build on pupils' knowledge securely enough, particularly where pupils have gaps in their prior learning. Teachers often adapt learning activities when gaps exist, rather than addressing the gap itself swiftly.

Typically, teaching across the curriculum is effective. Teachers make largely suitable adaptations to address barriers to learning. They ensure consistently that pupils revisit and recall previous learning. They check pupils' understanding regularly. However, their checks sometimes lack rigor and do not capture all pupils' learning. Teachers do not consistently use the information from these checks to inform future teaching or to address misconceptions.

## Early years

Expected standard 

The early years is a busy and ambitious, yet warm and nurturing environment. Thoughtful and firmly established routines, along with staff knowing children well, enable children to feel secure and learn well. Recently, leaders successfully introduced the new 'little ladybirds' provision for 2-year-olds, which supports the needs of these children very well. They thrive and develop confidence and independence quickly, alongside their older nursery peers.

Throughout the early years, children benefit from a thoroughly considered curriculum and approaches to teaching it. A firm emphasis on teaching key skills such as good listening, phonics, counting and holding pencils or other tools like paint brushes correctly, sets children up well for their future learning. Teaching is typically effective across the setting. Staff encourage children to join in enthusiastically with carefully selected, purposeful activities. They adapt teaching effectively for children with any barriers to learning. Through lots of purposeful talk, staff expand children's understanding and use of language as they play and learn. Astute leaders are continually refining the curriculum and strengthening the opportunities for staff to maximise their interactions with children.

The nursery prepares children well for starting the Reception Year, where they continue to develop and, overall, become well prepared for Year 1.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders strive to provide an inclusive school culture where every pupil feels valued. They are proactive in identifying any potential barriers to learning or wellbeing as soon as children start school in the early years. They work closely with parents and carers and make referrals to relevant external professionals to help accurately identify pupils' individual needs.

Leaders ensure staff develop the necessary skills to help overcome barriers to learning. Largely pupils benefit from suitable adaptations that enable them to access the curriculum and school life. Leaders and staff work together to devise support plans with precise, step-by-step targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some pupils with SEND do not have precise targets. Additionally, staff sometimes do not consider pupils' targets fully enough. Consequently, support for pupils with SEND does not consistently enable them to progress well and learn with independence. Leaders recognise this and are further developing staff expertise.

Leaders understand the challenges that disadvantaged pupils may experience. They use pupil premium funding purposefully to provide additional support with phonics and emotional well-being and to enable pupils to take full part in enrichment opportunities. Overall, this support impacts positively on disadvantaged pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors have a clear and shared vision for the school. They know the school's strengths and what needs to develop further, adopting a measured and manageable approach to school improvement. The impact of their work is evident in the early years and in pupils' behaviour and personal development. Leaders' efforts to raise

achievement are beginning to bear fruit in pupils' writing and are progressing well in mathematics.

Governors know their responsibilities and carry them out diligently. They have a range of ways to gain an accurate understanding of the school's work. This allows them to hold leaders to account and challenge them to improve pupils' achievement. Governors support leaders in making well-informed decisions that are in pupils' best interests.

Leaders and staff form a large yet close-knit team that consistently supports one another. Staff feel valued and appreciate the way leaders encourage regular opportunities to celebrate together, promoting their wellbeing. They also take pride in their active contribution to the school's improvement journey. Leaders ensure that the programme of professional learning aligns with what the school needs to improve. Staff develop their expertise with teaching writing and overcoming barriers to learning, for example. More recently staff are working with mathematics experts. Staff appreciate particularly the development opportunities they gain through the school's collaboration with other local schools. Leaders' outward-facing approach strengthens the school's improvement journey.

Mostly, parents and carers speak highly of the school and the close working relationships they have with leaders and staff.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders prioritise their holistic vision for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. The school's carefully considered programme supports pupils' belonging, confidence, relationships, and emotional understanding well.

Pupils learn how to take part responsibly in a culturally diverse modern society as a priority. Children start learning in an age-appropriate way about fundamental British values and characteristics that make people different in the early years. This helps pupils appreciate each other's uniqueness and understand that discrimination is wrong. They are respectful and open to a range of viewpoints, although their understanding of different religions is limited. Pupils develop a suitable understanding of British values and citizenship over time. They put this learning into action through their leadership roles such as pupil parliament representatives or ambassadors.

Leaders recently reviewed their curriculum for teaching pupils about key aspects such as health and relationships. Staff use carefully selected stories to enable pupils to reflect and debate real-life issues thoughtfully. Pupils understand potential risks to their safety and can talk about online safety and the dangers of gang culture, drugs and vaping. They enjoy physical exercise and know ways to maintain healthy lifestyles and relationships. Pastoral support is effective. The school constantly promotes positive mental health and wellbeing. Pupils learn to recognise their feelings and know how to request help when they need it. They receive carefully targeted support when they are struggling emotionally.

A breadth of enrichment activities in music, the arts and sport ensure that pupils' talents are nurtured. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform in choirs, musical instrument lessons and school plays. Pupils proudly represent the school in in handball, football and hockey sports competitions, for example, and continue their interests in extracurricular

clubs. Leaders are proactive in reducing barriers to ensure that disadvantaged pupils can access these opportunities alongside their peers.

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## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

Typically, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is lower than national averages and too many pupils are not well-prepared for secondary school. Leaders took appropriate action to improve achievement in writing and mathematics. Improvements are emerging in pupils' increasing attainment with writing and the work they produce now. Although, some inaccuracies in handwriting persist. Improvements in mathematics teaching are at an earlier stage, so it is too soon to see the impact. Some older pupils still have gaps in their mathematics knowledge, which hinder their ability to build understanding securely.

Pupils' attainment in reading is in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. This is because they typically gain a sound start in learning to read with phonics. Overall, pupils' progress in other curriculum subjects is suitable. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their topics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make generally suitable progress from their starting points.

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

Pupils are proud of their school and attend regularly. They feel safe and supported in the welcoming and nurturing environment. The school's routines and the positive relationships pupils share with staff, give pupils a clear sense of belonging and emotional security. This is especially the case where pupils have any barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Pupils enjoy school and behave well, showing great respect for staff, peers and visitors alike.

Children get off to a positive start to their education in the early years. The new 2-year-olds settle quickly alongside their nursery peers. Children develop great enthusiasm for learning and the right foundations for their learning throughout school. Generally, pupils' experiences of the school's curriculum build on this. However, recent improvements, such as in mathematics and writing, are not yet realised fully in pupils' achievement. Leaders are working on making sure that all pupils are well-prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils flourish in their broader development. The school's values underpin their growth. Pupils love to play and be adventurous, in all weathers. They are eager to put on their wellies and overalls at playtimes. They get involved enthusiastically in activities such as riding scooters and digging in the mud. They learn skills like cooperation, teamwork and resilience. They achieve personal challenges like learning to ride a bike. Pupils understand and follow all the safety rules. They wear helmets and take care with the spades. Playtimes are joyous with rarely any disagreement. Pupils do not worry about unkindness or bullying because it is uncommon and resolved effectively.

Pupils benefit from a range of experiences to learn about life in modern Britain and develop inclusive attitudes towards others. Overall, the school supports pupils well in becoming healthy, well-rounded citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities and can express themselves with confidence.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen and embed recent improvements in mathematics and writing to ensure pupils develop secure strong foundations that support their future learning and enable all pupils to achieve well.
  - Leaders should ensure teachers check pupils' learning systematically to identify misconceptions and gaps in learning, especially in mathematics. Leaders should ensure that teachers use this information consistently to inform and adapt their teaching, ensuring they address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning swiftly.
  - Leaders should ensure all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have precise targets. They should ensure that staff use these targets consistently to make adaptations that enable pupils with SEND to achieve greater success and independence.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Michael Cordin.

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 HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. They also spoke with leaders about their oversight of the school's work in a particular aspect, such as inclusion. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up her post in September 2023.

The school offers nursery provision for 3- and 4-year-old children. Since September 2025, the school also offer nursery provision for 2-year-olds.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Alison Prodger

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**Lead inspector:**

Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Sylvie Newman, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Mallender, 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 2 June 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

**348**

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**

**315**

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)**



**20.13%**

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**

**1.72%**

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**

**34.48%**

Well 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 | 45%         | 61%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 56%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 20%         | 61%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 60%         | 60%              | Close to average               |

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 | 71%         | 74%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 70%         | 75%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 64%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 78%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 72%              | Below                          |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 60%         | 72%              | Below                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 33%         | 72%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 78%         | 71%              | Close to average               |

## 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 61%         | 73%              | Below                          |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 63%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 53%         | 73%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 73%              | Close to average               |

## 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 28%         | 46%              | Below                          |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 38%         | 47%              | Close to average               |

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | 0%          | 46%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | 55%         | 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 | 59%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 63%         | 63%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 54%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 64%         | 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 | 44%         | 59%              | Below                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 50%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 8%          | 58%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 82%         | 58%              | Above                          |

### 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 50%         | 60%              | Below                          |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 50%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 38%         | 59%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 64%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 28%         | 68%                              | -40 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 38%         | 69%                              | -32 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 0%          | 67%                              | -67 pp                  |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 55%         | 66%                              | -12 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 | 59%         | 80%                              | -20 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 63%         | 81%                              | -18 pp                  |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 54%         | 80%                              | -26 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 64%         | 78%                              | -15 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 | 44%         | 78%                              | -34 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 50%         | 78%                              | -28 pp                  |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 8%          | 78%                              | -70 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 82%         | 77%                              | 4 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 | 50%         | 80%                              | -30 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 50%         | 81%                              | -31 pp                  |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 38%         | 79%                              | -41 pp                  |

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 64%         | 79%                              | -16 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 (3 term) | 5.7%        | 5.2%             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 5.3%        | 5.5%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 5.9%        | 5.9%             | Close to average               |

### 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) | 11.2%       | 13.0%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 11.4%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 15.3%       | 16.2%            | Close to average               |

## 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

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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