

Dunmore Primary School

Address: Northcourt Road, OX14 1NR

Unique reference number (URN): 135265

Inspection report: 25 November 2025

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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils achieve well and acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum from their individual starting points. They benefit from positive educational experiences that enrich their lives and prepare them effectively for the next stage of their education. The results of the Year 1 phonics check are consistently in line with the national average. This reflects the school's success in equipping pupils with secure early reading skills. At key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils achieve above the national average in reading.

Older pupils' achievement in national tests is generally in line with national averages in reading and mathematics. Outcomes in writing for disadvantaged pupils are improving. While outcomes in writing remain lower than national averages, leaders have taken decisive action to address this. The impact of their work is evident in pupils' books. Any gaps in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics knowledge are closing quickly.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Overall attendance rates are in line with the national average. Leaders take every opportunity to promote the importance of regular attendance. They have established effective systems for supporting families and follow up on attendance concerns rigorously. Staff are working well to help pupils and their families to overcome any barriers to attending school regularly. This is leading to improved rates of attendance, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, attendance for pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding remains below the national average. Some disadvantaged pupils miss valuable learning and social opportunities in school.

Overall, pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. They conduct themselves sensibly across the school. Staff encourage positive behaviour, using an effective and consistent approach that pupils understand and follow. This typically creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere where learning is not disrupted. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils value the positive sense of community, treat each other with courtesy and know how to be good friends. They trust staff to deal quickly with any unkindness, bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Leaders identify pupils who may need additional help to manage their behaviour and emotions and provide suitable, timely support.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced. It is carefully arranged so that pupils gain the knowledge and skills needed for their next stage of education. Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They act quickly when improvements are required and show determination to keep raising standards.

Overall, the curriculum is taught effectively. Staff benefit from regular professional development, which builds their expertise. Typically, staff use their subject knowledge well to

explain new content clearly. They adapt their teaching appropriately so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils access the full curriculum successfully. Overall, staff check pupils' prior knowledge and understanding carefully. They typically adjust their teaching to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, at times, there is some inconsistency in how well the curriculum is taught, particularly in the way teachers explain how pupils can improve their writing. As a result, some pupils do not develop their writing skills as well as they should.

Developing pupils' knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics is central to the curriculum. There is a deliberate focus on developing pupils' vocabulary, and typically, staff teach this well. Reading is a clear priority. Pupils enjoy a diverse and inclusive range of texts. Pupils who are still developing their reading skills get the right help to develop their accuracy and fluency.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are determined that all children will develop a love of learning and achieve well, regardless of their starting points. They have created a culture of high expectations. The ambitious, engaging and well-crafted curriculum means that staff understand what children are expected to learn and when. Staff work closely with parents and carers and help them to support their children's learning.

Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Staff provide a suitable range of activities for children to explore and learn. Staff know the children well and work sensitively to meet their social and emotional needs. There is a deliberate focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Overall, staff model vocabulary effectively and help children to practise and broaden the language they use. This effective start ensures that children, including the youngest in Nursery, settle quickly and develop a sense of belonging.

Reading is a priority. Early reading skills are developed well because phonics is taught effectively. Children learn the sounds different letters make and begin to blend the sounds together. Leaders make sure that children, including those in Nursery, have plenty of opportunities to practise and develop their early writing skills.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff share high ambitions for all pupils to achieve well. Thorough transition arrangements when pupils first join the school mean that leaders identify pupils' individual needs quickly and carefully. Leaders share information effectively with staff. Consequently, staff are clear about how to help pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. Pupils benefit from personalised programmes. For example, targeted support for pupils who are new to speaking English helps them to access the curriculum.

Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with other barriers to learning are supported effectively. Staff benefit from regular training. This means that they understand how to make suitable adaptations to their teaching so that pupils learn successfully. Leaders monitor strategies and resources carefully to ensure that they meet pupils' needs efficiently. They make adjustments promptly where refinements are required.

Leaders work effectively with families and professional agencies. For example, leaders collaborate with the local authority so that pupils who need it get appropriate support. Pupil premium funding is used well to promote disadvantaged pupils' academic, emotional and physical development. Leaders also check that any alternative provision is suitable and safe, making decisions in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils. They are committed to providing pupils with a rich and engaging curriculum that helps them to develop both personally and academically. Leaders place deliberate focus on provision for vulnerable groups, including pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care. They work constructively with governors, collaboratively making decisions that are always in the best interests of pupils. As a result, pupils play a full part in all aspects of school life.

Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They perform their roles well, understand their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. Governors have a secure grasp of the school's strategic approach to improvement. They provide timely support and challenge.

Leaders have established reliable systems for monitoring the school's work. Consequently, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where further developments are needed. For example, they have rightly identified the need to ensure that writing is taught consistently well in all areas. Additionally, leaders know that they need to continue to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders ensure that all staff benefit from a suitable professional learning programme that builds their expertise. It is designed carefully so that it aligns with the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders maintain a positive and supportive working environment. They take suitable steps to help staff to manage their workload and wellbeing. As a result, staff feel valued and listened to. Leaders and staff also foster constructive relationships with parents and carers.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing is well considered. A sense of care and respect pervades the school. From the early years, children are encouraged to care for themselves and each other. Staff respond sensitively to children's needs, while also successfully promoting independence. Pupils are kind and thoughtful, and they value the shared sense of community. They trust staff to look after them and have no concerns about any unkindness or friendship issues. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel settled and confident.

Pupils become confident citizens. They understand the fundamental British values. Pupils discuss and debate their ideas with an appreciation of and respect for different views. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils learn about equality and demonstrate respect for cultural diversity and religious belief. For instance, they understand

the significance of their class names, which represent different countries, and can discuss historic and geographic features. Pupils recognise that this reflects the international nature of their school community. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

There is a well-designed and age-appropriate personal, social and health education programme. Generally, this develops pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe, maintain healthy relationships and make positive lifestyle choices well. Pupils also learn about hygiene, healthy eating, physical fitness and the risks associated with modern technology.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that broaden their experiences. This enables them to develop their talents and interests in areas such as the arts, music and sport. Pupils make a purposeful contribution to their community by taking on responsibilities such as that of school councillor or librarian. These opportunities are open to all, reflecting the inclusive nature of the school.

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

Pupils enjoy their time in this inclusive and welcoming school. Each morning, they arrive confident, resilient and eager to learn. Forging positive relationships is at the heart of daily life. Pupils feel sure that staff care about them. This helps them to feel safe. They trust adults to help them with any concerns, including any bullying or unkindness.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and polite to each other. Staff set clear routines and boundaries. Pupils learn to take responsibility. Typically, they behave well, stay focused on their learning and take pride in their work. Pupils show respect and courtesy. They demonstrate the school's values of 'kindness, courage and curiosity' in their daily interactions. From the early years, children listen attentively to staff. They learn to cooperate, take turns and share. Attendance is improving, but some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend frequently enough.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to aim high and achieve well. Pupils respond positively to these expectations. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get effective help when they need it. As a result, the curriculum is accessible and meets pupils' needs. Pupils generally achieve well. However, there are some inconsistencies in how effectively the curriculum is taught, particularly in the way teachers explain how to improve pupils' writing.

Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities the school provides to broaden their horizons. All pupils learn to play 3 instruments and have the opportunity to play in the school orchestra. Clubs such as Mandarin, choir and gymnastics help to develop pupils' talents and interests. A variety of trips to places such as museums and a residential trip to a farm enable pupils to find out about their local area. Pupils relish taking on leadership roles, for example as school councillor, librarian or sports leader. They wear their badges with pride.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their work to secure high attendance for all pupils, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged.
 - Leaders should continue to embed and strengthen consistency in the teaching of writing across all subjects.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dr James Thomson.

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 headteacher, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. She also met with a representative from Oxfordshire local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 4 unregistered alternative provisions.

In September 2023, the headteacher was seconded to another role, and there was an interim headteacher during this time. He returned to his post as headteacher in September 2024.

Headteacher: Samuel Bartholomew

Lead inspector:

Louise Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Woodbridge, His Majesty's Inspector

Tash Hurtado, 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

431

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

16.18%

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

3.25%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support

16.47%

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 maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	61%	Below
2024/25	50%	62%	Below
2023/24	40%	61%	Below
2022/23	67%	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	78%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	67%	74%	Below
2022/23	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	58%	72%	Below
2024/25	55%	72%	Below
2023/24	47%	72%	Below
2022/23	71%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	55%	73%	Below
2022/23	82%	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	30%	46%	Below
2024/25	31%	47%	Below
2023/24	20%	46%	Below
2022/23	40%	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	73%	62%	Above
2024/25	69%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	50%	62%	Below
2022/23	100%	60%	Above

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	36%	59%	Below
2024/25	46%	59%	Below
2023/24	20%	58%	Below
2022/23	40%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	38%	61%	Below
2023/24	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23	90%	59%	Above

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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	30%	68%	-37 pp
2024/25	31%	69%	-38 pp
2023/24	20%	67%	-47 pp
2022/23	40%	66%	-26 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	73%	80%	-7 pp
2024/25	69%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23	100%	78%	22 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	36%	78%	-41 pp
2024/25	46%	78%	-32 pp
2023/24	20%	78%	-58 pp
2022/23	40%	77%	-37 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	61%	80%	-19 pp
2024/25	38%	81%	-42 pp
2023/24	60%	79%	-19 pp
2022/23	90%	79%	11 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 (1 term)	5.1%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	5.3%	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 (1 term)	13.5%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	12.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	13.2%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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