

Cavendish Close Junior Academy

Address: Deborah Drive, Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire, DE21 4RJ

Unique reference number (URN): 144822

Inspection report: 23 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, and from a broad range of starting points, pupils achieve well. This is reflected in the outcomes of national assessments. These show that the proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected of them at the end of key stage 2 does not differ significantly from national figures. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Achievement in the Year 4 multiplication tables check, which has historically been below national averages, is improving. Current pupils are doing much better.

Pupils successfully learn the essential skills and knowledge that they need to access the curriculum. The school quickly identifies where any gaps exist and ensures that these are addressed.

On the whole, pupils have a secure recall of the curriculum and are able to talk confidently about their learning from several terms ago.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked hard to bring about improvements in attendance. Since the school's last inspection, it has improved dramatically. Attendance rates are higher than national. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below average. The school has established robust systems and processes to identify, challenge and support pupils and their families where attendance needs to improve. This has brought about significant and demonstrable improvements.

Behaviour around the school is positive. Pupils are typically polite and courteous. They open doors for each other and greet one another, and visitors, warmly. They are proud of their school. Incidents of serious poor behaviour, including bullying, are rare. They are dealt with swiftly and robustly when they do occur. Any pupils who need additional help to live up to the school's expectations of being 'Safe, Respectful and Engaged' receive the support that they need. This support is well designed.

Pupils value the extensive range of rewards and incentives on offer. They are proud of the points, marbles and miniature ducks that they earn. They are confident that adults will support them if they behave inappropriately. In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Typically, they work hard and demonstrate impressive levels of concentration. Younger pupils are developing these habits at a rapid rate.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Across all subjects, the school's curriculum is well organised. It makes clear the precise knowledge that pupils are expected to acquire and remember. It builds cumulatively on what has gone before.

Leaders systematically check the effectiveness of teaching. They have a secure understanding of the strengths that exist and the areas where practice can be improved further. As a result of training, teachers have a consistent understanding of what good-quality teaching looks like. Typically, this is implemented effectively. Teaching enables pupils to revisit what they have learned previously and to remember content in the long term. Teachers typically adapt lessons well for all groups of pupils. However, in a small number of cases, teachers do not check closely enough on how well pupils are getting on in lessons. As a result, in these instances, pupils who are struggling, or have misconceptions, are not identified and addressed promptly.

The school's curriculum ensures that any gaps in pupils' essential knowledge are identified and addressed. This includes gaps in writing, letter formation, mathematics and reading. Pupils who remain in the early stages of learning to read benefit from a well-organised programme of systematic synthetic phonics. Pupils go on to study a wide range of texts, authors and genres. They typically develop a love of reading.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the multiple barriers and vulnerabilities that pupils face. They keep a close eye on how each pupil in the school is progressing. Any barriers to pupils' academic and personal development are quickly identified and addressed. The school closely monitors the effectiveness of its actions.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help that they need to succeed. Targets contained within their individual plans are well chosen and regularly reviewed. Pupils, parents and carers are typically involved in this process. The school caters well for its high proportion of pupils who have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The longer-term targets contained within these plans are skilfully broken down into shorter-term goals. The school has a well-organised approach to identifying SEND. Teachers have a good understanding of what they must do to help and have received the training necessary to do so.

Disadvantaged pupils are well-supported. The school's pupil premium strategy accurately identifies the barriers that these pupils face. The actions that it sets out are fit for purpose. However, while leaders keep a close eye on how these pupils are getting on, they do not carry out sufficiently detailed checks on how effectively their strategy is working.

Pupils who are looked after are carefully monitored. The school works effectively with a wide range of external agencies, including the local authority's virtual school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision to develop pupils' 'Aspirations, Collaboration and Experiences'. This vision is evident in the day-to-day operation of the school. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, foster a culture in which everyone works together in pupils' best interests, and provide pupils with experiences and opportunities that prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders know their school well. They know where strengths lie and where further work is needed to strengthen provision. They have a demonstrable track record of bringing about improvements, including in behaviour, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and, quite dramatically, attendance. However, in some cases leaders do not use the full range of information that they hold to check on the impact of the school's work. This includes in aspects of behaviour, teaching and their quality assurance work. As a result, they do not have a highly detailed view of their successes and where relative weaknesses might emerge over time.

Positive relationships sit at the heart of the school. Leaders have built a cohesive and united staff team. Staff unanimously agree that leaders take good care of their workload and wellbeing. The school's training programme is well organised. It ensures that staff receive the training they need to carry out their duties effectively. Leaders check that training is put into practice.

The work of the trust is systematic and well organised. It provides the school with a well-balanced combination of support and challenge. In turn, trustees hold trust leaders to good account for the impact of their work with the school.

The school is highly regarded by parents and carers. As one parent summed up in a letter to inspectors, 'Cavendish Close goes above and beyond.'

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development offer aims for pupils to 'Believe, Achieve and Succeed', and it does this well. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships education is well designed. It takes into account the specific challenges that pupils face.

The school's 10-point pledge helps pupils to understand how to be active members of their community. It helps them to understand how to be resilient, how to solve problems and how to be effective communicators, to name but a few examples. Pupils know how these qualities help them to be good citizens.

Pupils learn to be inclusive, respectful and tolerant. They learn about a wide range of people, places and communities from around the world. They have an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. They are determined that there are 'no outsiders' at their school.

The school provides a broad range of activities that enrich and extend the curriculum. The school works closely with the fire service, local police and utility companies, helping pupils to learn about a wide range of jobs that may be open to them in the future. Pupils look forward to the outdoor activities that they undertake. Leaders ensure that the extra-curricular offer, including activities in sports and the arts, is available to all pupils.

Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Staff have been trained to be experts in supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. They do this well. Pupils are proud of the positive contribution that they make to their school. Roles, including head pupils, sports councillors, academy councillors and eco councillors are taken seriously. Older pupils are eager to help out. They are positive role models for younger ones.

Overall, pupils are prepared well for their next stages of education and for life in modern Britain.

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

Cavendish Close Junior Academy is a calm, respectful and happy school. Positive relationships between pupils and staff underpin everything that happens. The school gets to know its pupils well, understands the multiple challenges that they face and puts the right help in place at the right time. It is inclusive. As a result, from their relative starting points, pupils thrive. By the end of their time at the school, the proportion of pupils achieving the standards expected of them is typically in line with national averages.

Pupils know that they are expected to be safe, be respectful and to be engaged. On a daily basis, they do their utmost to live up to these expectations. They are well behaved and supportive of one another. They are eager to help out if anyone struggles. Many demonstrate an impressive level of courtesy, including holding doors open for one another and greeting each other warmly around the school. Pupils value the vast range of rewards and incentives on offer, including earning points, collecting marbles for jars, being awarded miniature ducks and enjoying hot chocolate with the principal. The list goes on. When pupils struggle to live up to the school's expectations, staff provide consistently good-quality help and support.

Pupils enjoy attending. They are happy to be there. They are well looked after and feel safe. Bullying is rare but is dealt with swiftly when it occurs. Rates of attendance have improved significantly over the last few years and are significantly higher than national figures.

Pupils' personal development is well supported. They learn about a range of people, communities and religions from around the world. They learn to be tolerant, respectful and inclusive. Pupils benefit from a vast range of extracurricular and enrichment activities that broaden their experiences.

Next steps

- The school should ensure that teachers consistently check on how well pupils are getting on in lessons so that anyone who begins to fall behind is quickly identified and supported.
 - Leaders should ensure that they carefully evaluate the impact that their pupil premium strategy has on disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that they use the full range of information that they have to evaluate the impact of the school's work over time.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Harmony Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Antony Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew McCully.

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 held meetings with the principal, the assistant principals, senior leaders and trust representatives, including the chief executive officer and a representative of the board of trustees.

The school uses no alternative provisions.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

There have been no significant changes since the school's last inspection which took place in January 2022.

Principal: Michelle Tague

Lead inspector:

Vic Wilkinson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nyree Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Anderson, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

300

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

360

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)

35.00%

Above 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

7.00%

Well above 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

21.00%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

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)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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
Latest 3 year average	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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
Latest 3 year average	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	66%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	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	65%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average

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	62%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	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
Latest 3 year average	48%	68%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	49%	67%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	66%	-20 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	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	80%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	61%	78%	-18 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	65%	78%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	61%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	78%	-10 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	64%	77%	-13 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	62%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	79%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	61%	79%	-18 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)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	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)	5.2%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.6%	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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