

# Midsomer Norton Primary School

**Address:** High Street, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 2DR

**Unique reference number (URN):** 144830

## Inspection report: 31 March 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 ●

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school's inclusive ethos is deeply embedded in daily practice. Staff know pupils well and act quickly when needs emerge, beginning in the nursery. Leaders collect detailed information from families and external agencies. This helps them understand each pupil's barriers to learning. Staff use this knowledge to make precise adaptations. For example, they provide visual prompts and physical adjustments to help pupils access learning effectively.

Pupils in Comets, the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow carefully designed curriculum pathways. Staff use detailed assessments to shape these plans. Pupils successfully join their peers for lessons each day. This strengthens their sense of belonging and helps them engage fully in school life.

Leaders monitor the progress of pupils with SEND closely. They use this information to plan targeted catch-up programmes and refine practice. External specialists and trust leaders provide regular guidance and training. Staff act on this expertise to meet pupils' diverse needs, so they make strong progress from their starting points.

The pupil premium strategy is implemented with precision. It removes obstacles for disadvantaged pupils and ensures that they can enjoy the full school offer. Access to clubs, specialist support and breakfast provision helps pupils attend, participate and thrive.

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## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, including those who are disadvantaged. This means that they are fully prepared for the rigour of secondary school. Published outcomes reflect this. Achievement in the Year 4 multiplication check has also been above the national average for several years.

Most pupils gain secure knowledge across a broad range of subjects. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make connections between subjects, such as linking what they know about the Second World War with Judaism in religious education. They generally produce neat and well-presented work. However, pupils' progress is not consistently strong across all year groups. A minority of pupils do not master key skills, such as letter formation, sentence structure and punctuation, by the end of key stage 1. This limits their ability to complete more complex written tasks with accuracy.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

A deep sense of belonging runs through the school. Most pupils are keen to attend. Leaders track pupils' attendance carefully. They act swiftly and effectively when concerns arise. For example, they arrange meetings with families or use attendance contracts to improve

attendance. Leaders offer various support options, such as the early morning breakfast club, to boost individual attendance. As a result, attendance continues to improve. It is now broadly in line with the national average, with low persistent absence.

Leaders and staff foster a calm, positive learning environment. Classrooms are orderly. Pupils settle quickly into learning. They listen well and show respect for adults and each other. Pupils follow the 'green rules' by being kind and trying hard in lessons. This helps them earn 'greenie time' each week. At social times, pupils of different ages play football, climb, dance and happily chat with each other. Staff model positive interactions with pupils and often join in with games. Bullying and discrimination are rare. Leaders deal with any concerns that arise quickly and effectively. This means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel safe and thrive.

## **Curriculum and teaching**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have made changes to improve and refine the curriculum since the previous inspection. Important knowledge is organised in a logical order from the early years to Year 6. Staff support the needs of pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use a range of teaching strategies, such as recall activities and effective questioning, to revisit and strengthen key concepts over time. Typically, this supports pupils in building knowledge across a range of subjects.

Leaders hold an accurate understanding of the curriculum and teaching. This has informed their work to strengthen aspects, for example, in mathematics. Teachers model new learning clearly. They are increasingly confident in teaching important knowledge and skills. This includes phonics, reading, multiplication facts and subject-specific vocabulary. For instance, they use images and rhymes to help pupils grasp concepts such as parallel and perpendicular lines. The impact of teaching is often evident in how confidently pupils explain and discuss their learning. However, there is some variation in the teaching of early writing. At times, this does not help pupils to become fluent writers by the end of key stage 1. Leaders recognise this and are working with staff to address these inconsistencies.

## **Early years**

**Expected standard** 

Warm relationships exist between staff and children. This helps children settle, feel safe and adapt to school routines.

Children benefit from a well-structured curriculum. In the early years classes, staff frequently use stories, songs and rhymes. This helps build children's communication and vocabulary. Staff introduce ambitious words, such as 'slurping' and 'crouch', with clear explanations and actions. Generally, they support children's speech and language effectively through purposeful interactions.

Staff shape provision to children's starting points. Activities such as obstacle courses and painting strengthen the skills needed for writing. Children in the Nursery Year develop an age-appropriate awareness of numbers, letters and sounds. Reception Year children write words and phrases with increasing independence.

Children learn to make healthy choices and manage risk. They take part in tooth-brushing sessions and know how to stay safe around the fire pit when toasting marshmallows.

Staff act early to minimise gaps in children's development, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They assess children's physical and language skills when they join the school. If needed, they seek expert help.

Staff work closely with parents and carers. Families value the communication they receive. By the end of Reception Year, most children are ready for Year 1.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders' decisions show their commitment to giving pupils the best start. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the curriculum and raised expectations. This has led to a narrowing of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Staff buy into leaders' vision for improvement. They value the 'family-like culture' and spirit of teamwork and collaboration. Staff welcome the training they receive, especially on strategies to help pupils with SEND. They also praise the attention leaders give to workload and wellbeing.

Leaders know the school well. They have set clear priorities, such as improving writing and expanding the outdoor learning provision. Leaders gather a range of information to assess their work. They look at attendance data and work in books, and speak with pupils. Leaders know that they need to tighten how they check the impact of their work so that standards improve consistently across the school.

Governance is effective. Trustees and local governors have a secure understanding of the school's priorities. They act in pupils' best interests. For example, they ask challenging questions about pupils' attendance and the impact of extra funding on pupils. Furthermore, they check that arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective.

Most parents and carers speak highly of the school. They appreciate the school's welcoming atmosphere. Parents praise staff's commitment to pupils' wellbeing and academic success.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that reflects the school's context. They adapt the content effectively to address local issues, such as online safety. The programme links well with other curriculum subjects. For example, pupils learn about healthy living in personal, social, and health education. They then apply this knowledge in science and physical education. Older pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and consent.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values and learn to tell right from wrong. Older pupils talk confidently about democracy and fairness. They apply this understanding when electing sports leaders and school ambassadors. Through books and

assemblies, pupils learn about different family types and faiths and the importance of showing respect and kindness.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that build their talents, interests and sense of identity. They visit museums, libraries, farms and local historical sites. Community events, such as art trails and singing in local venues, help pupils see their role in the wider community. Leaders track participation in activities beyond the classroom to ensure that all pupils can access the opportunities on offer.

Staff promote pupils' mental and physical wellbeing effectively. Outdoor learning activities further enhance pupils' skills, including teamwork and caring for nature. Pupils relish taking part in dancing, sporting events and cross-country. They know how to make healthy choices by eating well and staying hydrated.

Pupils readily take on important roles of responsibility. For example, older pupils enjoy contributing to the school community through 'champions of change'. Pupils have a voice and know how to use it to make a positive contribution to their school. By Year 6, pupils are mature, thoughtful and well prepared for the personal challenges ahead.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of this welcoming and inclusive school. They feel safe because staff are caring and kind. Staff take the time to understand pupils' individual needs and circumstances. This helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to school and supports regular attendance.

Across the school, pupils consistently demonstrate the core values of kindness, fairness and respect. They treat one another equally and readily offer help to others. Clear routines start in the early years and continue throughout the school. This helps the school day run smoothly. Pupils trust staff to deal with any concerns that arise, including bullying, quickly and fairly.

The school provides meaningful experiences beyond the academic curriculum. These help pupils to develop their character, resilience and confidence. For example, a highlight for many is representing the school at the Dance Umbrella festival. Many pupils enjoy clubs, such as gardening, sewing and Japanese. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are fully included and able to take part, so that all pupils feel valued. Pupils willingly take on leadership roles. They serve as members of the eco committee and class ambassadors. These roles give pupils a strong voice and help them contribute significantly to school life.

Pupils respond positively to their learning. Those who need extra help, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those attending the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, receive sensitive support so they can access learning alongside their peers. Leaders celebrate pupils' achievements through gold awards and headteacher commendations. This helps motivate pupils to work hard and do their best. By the end of Year 6, most pupils meet or exceed national expectations. They leave the school as independent learners, ready for the next stage of education. Occasionally,

inconsistencies in the teaching of early writing mean that some pupils do not secure fluent writing skills.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the early writing curriculum is implemented consistently so that pupils develop accurate transcription skills and can apply them confidently to more complex writing tasks.
  - Leaders should check the impact of improvement priorities more systematically, so they can evaluate precisely whether actions are bringing about the intended outcomes.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Alun Williams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tony Wells.

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 executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and other school staff during the inspection.

The lead inspector met with local governors and trustees, including the CEO of the trust. Inspectors also met with other trust leaders, including the director of primary school improvement.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes a 10-place specially resourced provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties. It opened in September 2023.

The school does not currently make use any of any alternative provision.

The head of school is Sarah Biss.

Executive headteacher: Alun Randell

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**Lead inspector:**

Dale Burr, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Lizzy Meadows, Ofsted Inspector

Richard Light, 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 31 March 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

**270**

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)**

**26.50%**

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**

**4.07%**

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**

**16.30%**

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)**

**Resourced provision**

**What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

**Type of specialist provision (if applicable)**

**SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty**

**What does this mean?**

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 70%         | 61%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 78%         | 62%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 68%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 66%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 81%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 88%         | 75%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 81%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 76%         | 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 | 81%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 78%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 84%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 82%         | 71%              | Above                          |

**Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Latest 3 year average | 77%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 81%         | 74%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 68%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 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 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> | 56%         | 46%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 47%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 45%         | 46%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 47%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 67%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 63%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 73%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 53%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 78%         | 59%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 59%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 91%         | 58%              | Above                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 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 | 67%         | 60%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 80%         | 61%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 59%              | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 73%         | 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 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 | 56%         | 68%                              | -12 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 80%         | 69%                              | 11 pp                   |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 45%         | 67%                              | -22 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 47%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 67%         | 80%                              | -13 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 81%                              | -1 pp                   |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 73%         | 80%                              | -7 pp                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 53%         | 78%                              | -25 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 78%         | 78%                              | 0 pp                    |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 78%                              | 2 pp                    |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 91%         | 78%                              | 13 pp                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 77%                              | -11 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 67%         | 80%                              | -13 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 81%                              | -1 pp                   |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 45%         | 79%                              | -34 pp                  |

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 73%         | 79%                              | -6 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 (2 term) | 4.9%        | 5.2%             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 5.5%        | 5.5%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 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 (2 term) | 9.6%        | 13.3%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 14.4%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 7.7%        | 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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