

Blackwell Community Primary and Nursery School

Address: Primrose Hill, Blackwell, Alferton, Alferton, Derbyshire, DE55 5JG

Unique reference number (URN): 112506

Inspection report: 20 January 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 

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Typically, they achieve well from their starting points. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in national tests are in line with national averages, including those of disadvantaged pupils. This is because the school provides support that helps disadvantaged pupils overcome barriers and close gaps in their knowledge. Over time, the proportion of pupils who pass the Year 1 phonics screening check is above the national average.

Pupils make steady progress through the school's broad curriculum. They recall prior learning with reasonable accuracy and can talk confidently about what they have learned. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 explain the key features of instructional writing, such as using imperative verbs. Pupils' growing knowledge is also evident in their work. For instance, in Year 6, pupils use vectors to create simple 2-dimensional digital drawings.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders take appropriate action to promote attendance. They track pupils' attendance closely and identify individual pupils when there are concerns. When this happens, leaders step in quickly to offer support and challenge. As a result of this work, attendance is in line with national averages.

Leaders have recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy. They have established clear rewards and consequences, which pupils understand. Staff apply the policy consistently. They are fair and considerate when pupils need reminders about their behaviour. Staff also make sure that pupils who need extra help to manage their feelings receive targeted support. Increasingly, pupils learn how to regulate their behaviour so that they can meet the school's expectations.

Across the school, the learning environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils show respect for their teachers and for each other. They understand that bullying or any form of discrimination is wrong. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning and do not disrupt others. However, there are times when some pupils do not engage as effectively as they could, for example in class discussions when they do not readily share their ideas or answers.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders, including subject leaders, carry out regular checks that help them understand what is working well and where further action is needed. They prioritise appropriate steps to continue strengthening the curriculum. For example, this year they have focused on improving pupils' recall of prior learning. Across the school, teachers deliver the curriculum with skill. Their explanations are clear and they model new learning effectively. Staff adapt learning to meet pupils' differing needs. This helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can learn well alongside their peers.

Leaders make sure that pupils gain the knowledge they need to be prepared for the next stage in their education. Communication, reading, writing and mathematics sit at the core of the curriculum. Pupils who fall behind receive extra help to develop these important skills. Early reading is generally taught well, and many pupils become confident, fluent readers. However, staff do not always correct pupils when they do not use their phonics knowledge accurately, which slows some pupils' ability to read with sufficient fluency. In addition, the school's handwriting policy is not implemented consistently, which means some pupils do not form letters accurately, and this slows their ability to write fluently.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff work closely with parents and carers to help children get off to a positive start and develop a love of learning. Children are well cared for. The curriculum is designed with children's needs in mind. When children join the early years, staff check carefully to see where they may need extra support. This year, communication and language are a priority. Staff have received additional training to help develop children's language skills. They model key vocabulary and gently correct errors. As a result, many children are confident in conversation and can communicate their needs. Children who face additional barriers to learning are supported to access the same curriculum as their peers. Children are prepared to move to Year 1.

A wide range of learning activities helps children to learn well across all areas of the early years curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to practise early reading and number skills. They count forwards and backwards and play phonics games. Children's personal, social and emotional needs are considered carefully and planned for. As a result, they play and learn happily together. When needed, adults remind children to make 'good choices', and they do.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils who are in care. They promote an inclusive culture where pupils feel welcome and able to take part in school life.

The school has clear systems to identify pupils who may face barriers to learning. Staff notice when pupils need extra help and gather information from parents and carers. When relevant, they consult with previous settings to understand pupils' individual needs. Leaders use this information, alongside their own checks, to put suitable support in place. When necessary, the school seeks advice from specialists.

Leaders review how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. When a strategy does not have the expected impact, staff adjust their approach. Leaders choose strategies that are informed by research and aim to help pupils make steady progress personally and academically. Staff receive training that helps them understand pupils' needs. They make considered choices so that pupils can access the curriculum. Leaders use additional funding, including the pupil premium, appropriately to reduce barriers for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school well. They have a clear vision for the school and are ambitious for all pupils. They use their understanding of the school to identify priorities that support continued improvement. They are held in high regard by parents and carers. They have established a positive culture of inclusion. Pupils feel welcome and develop a sense of belonging.

Leaders work effectively with staff, and there is a strong team ethos. Staff speak positively about the school's leadership. They have confidence that leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils while also considering staff's workload and wellbeing. Staff benefit from training and professional opportunities that help them develop their expertise and contribute to school improvement priorities.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school, its context and its priorities for improvement. They provide appropriate support and challenge. For example, they review the information they receive to check the impact of the school's work on disadvantaged pupils. Governors also make their own checks to validate what leaders tell them. They visit the school and speak to leaders, staff, pupils and parents.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders use their understanding of the school's context to plan a well-considered programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils have access to a range of opportunities that broaden their experiences. The 'Blackwell Charter' sets out the activities pupils will take part in during their time at the school. This includes a museum visit, a residential trip, outdoor learning and learning how to ride a bicycle safely. Pupils appreciate the value of helping others. They take pride in responsibilities such as being book monitors, play leaders, 'line starter and ender' or representing their classmates on the school parliament. Pupils develop confidence. They talk about school life to visitors and share their developing skills, such as playing the clarinet or djembe drums, with friends and family.

Pupils are prepared for their future lives. The personal, social and health education curriculum covers a wide range of age-appropriate topics. Pupils learn how to stay safe online, such as through not sharing passwords. They learn that healthy relationships are based on trust and respect. Pupils know that everyone should be treated with respect, whatever their background, including their race, religion, gender, age, family situation or disability. They understand the principles of fundamental British values. Leaders help pupils see the possibilities their futures might hold. For example, pupils were inspired after a recent visit to Rolls-Royce and now see engineering as a potential career.

Pupils' wellbeing is a priority. Pastoral support is provided for pupils who need extra help to feel positive about themselves. The school also signposts families to agencies that can offer mental health support.

Leaders track pupils' participation in clubs and activities. They use this information to identify pupils who may need encouragement and to remove any barriers that prevent them from

joining in. As a result, a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils take up the school's wider offer.

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

Blackwell Community Primary and Nursery School provides a happy and safe learning environment for all pupils. Pupils learn to value their education, and they enjoy learning. The school's motto, 'unlocking potential, providing opportunities, achieving goals', is lived out. From the moment pupils arrive at the school in the morning, learning begins. Pupils are familiar with the routines of the school day. They quickly settle to the tasks they are given. They work with focus. They listen well to the adults in school and each other. They give of their best and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. If pupils need to be reminded about the school's expectations for their behaviour, they respond promptly. Staff know pupils well. They recognise their strengths and when they need help to prepare to learn. In lessons and at social times, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils understand the importance of good manners and are positive advocates for their school. They do not worry about bullying because they are confident that the adults in school would help them to make it stop.

Relationships between staff and pupils are based on kindness and respect. Many parents comment on the care their child receives at school. One parent's comment was typical of many, 'My child feels safe, valued, and confident coming to school each day.'

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities that broaden the school's curriculum offer. They develop a love of the arts. They learn to play a musical instrument. They make films and create their own artwork with the help of experts. They learn to link the power of physical activity with positive mental health in 'tai chi' lessons. They are proud that they have recently qualified for county competitions for basketball and dodgeball.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff routinely correct pupils' errors when they use their phonics knowledge to sound out words, so that pupils learn accurate strategies and develop greater reading fluency.
- Leaders should ensure that the school's handwriting policy is implemented consistently, so that pupils form letters accurately and write with increasing fluency.
- Leaders should ensure that staff use a wider range of strategies to involve all pupils in class discussions, so that pupils engage more fully in their learning.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sarah Parekh.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with 4 governors, including the chair of governors. She also met remotely with representatives of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Gardner

Lead inspector:

Caroline Poole, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Heidi Bastock, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

118

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 272

School capacity

168

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.27%

Well 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

3.39%

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

22.03%

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

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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	60%	Above

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 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	44%	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	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	61%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	39%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	44%	66%	-22 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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	78%	-12 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	61%	78%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	79%	-24 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.1%	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 (2 term)	9.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	14.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	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 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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