

Healdswood Infants' and Nursery School

Address: Barker Avenue, Skegby, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 3FQ

Unique reference number (URN): 122488

Inspection report: 13 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

Early years

Expected standard

The early years provision is a captivating home-from-home environment. A lot of thought and care has gone into ensuring that children quickly develop a sense of belonging. Consequently, children feel secure, valued and ready to learn. Staff build highly positive relationships with children, using high-quality interactions to extend children's thinking, model rich vocabulary and gently support language development. Purposeful play is at the heart of the curriculum, with carefully planned activities that reflect children's interests and starting points. This includes familiar resources in role play to encourage talk, and well-sequenced activities that build early writing skills. Vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported sensitively through adaptations and nurturing relationships.

Communication and language are prioritised, with staff trained to identify and address barriers to children's speech and language when necessary. Stories and high-quality texts shape independent learning activities, helping children explore new vocabulary and story language. Reading is a clear focus, and Reception children access daily phonics sessions.

Parents and carers are valued partners, and transitions into Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are carefully planned. As a result, children make strong progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school's commitment to inclusion is evident in its daily practice and guides the way it supports pupils and families. Supporting disadvantaged pupils is a clear priority, and the pastoral team provides caring and responsive help. Leaders use their expertise and detailed understanding of each pupil to put personalised support in place. They ensure staff are suitably trained to deliver effective provision.

The school identifies pupils' needs early, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and others facing challenges receive timely help. Leaders frequently review the impact of their work to ensure their approaches support pupils' academic progress and personal development. Leaders recognise that some disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as they could and improving this remains a key focus.

Pupil premium funding is used thoughtfully to remove barriers to learning and ensure that every pupil can take part in all aspects of school life. Pupils are encouraged to join clubs, take part in trips and enjoy enrichment activities. Free breakfast for all pupils, subsidised enrichment opportunities and frequent learning in the school's woodland area help make experiences accessible to everyone.

The school provides a rich and thoughtfully designed personal development offer that supports pupils' understanding of respect, difference and diversity very well. Pupils learn to reflect on their own beliefs, respect the views of others and understand right from wrong. Developing pupils' knowledge of a range of faiths and cultures is something leaders have identified to strengthen further. Pupils develop well-mannered social skills and take an active role in their community through projects such as fundraising and food bank collections. British values are woven meaningfully through school life. Pupils learn the importance of democracy when voting for the school 'Prime Minister', for example. They sing the school's British values rap with great pride, embedding their understanding of these important values.

The school celebrates diversity with books, displays and experiences that reflect a wide range of cultures and characteristics. Pupils learn from creative and cultural opportunities, including music, art, and dance. The school raises pupils' aspirations through visits from people in a range of employment. There are budding sculptors, bus drivers and firefighters, to name but a few.

Pupils learn to keep physically and mentally healthy and how to stay safe online. For example, the youngest children learn about oral hygiene, and all pupils learn to identify and discuss their feelings. They learn about healthy relationships, at an age-appropriate level. The school provides effective pastoral support to meet pupils' needs and ensures that pupils' wellbeing is a priority.

Disadvantaged pupils are supported well through breakfast provision, targeted pastoral care and access to all enrichment opportunities. Staff use nurturing approaches to help pupils manage their emotions and build resilience. Leadership roles, such as those of school councillors and play leaders, help pupils develop confidence and responsibility. Pupils learn how to show care and kindness when looking after Robbie the school rabbit.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils are not developing the vital skills and knowledge they need to read with fluency and write with accuracy. This hampers their progress through the curriculum. While curriculum breadth is secure, there is a need to raise expectations for written outcomes, address pupils' misconceptions more consistently, and strengthen opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across subjects, so that they progress as well as they can.

Many children begin school with gaps in early language and overall knowledge. In the early years, children make strong progress from their starting points and are prepared well for their next stages. This is because effective teaching and targeted support successfully help them to progress. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening test are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well because of the bespoke support they receive.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance is below national levels, and persistent absence is too high. This includes the attendance of groups, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Using careful tracking, leaders have rightly identified this as a key priority, and actions are underway to address it. Staff use well-considered strategies and adjustments to remove any barriers that might make pupils reluctant to come to school. For example, pupils who find the busy start to the school day overwhelming are given a short time to settle in before joining their class.

Pupils show consistently positive behaviour. In lessons, they try hard, stay focused and strive to earn 'leaf rewards' for being a 'team effort expert' or 'learning legend'. Breaktimes are happy and joyful, with pupils playing together happily. Staff are excellent role models and set a clear, calm example, helping pupils understand exactly what is expected. Warm, respectful relationships underpin the school's approach, and pupils who need extra help to manage their emotions receive thoughtful, tailored support. This enables them to thrive. Pupils are courteous, supportive of one another and welcoming. They understand that bullying is unacceptable and, although any form of unkind behaviour happens rarely, leaders respond swiftly and appropriately whenever concerns are raised.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teaching does not consistently help pupils enough with errors in their writing and skills, including handwriting and spelling. This hinders some pupils' achievement and the presentational quality of their work. Leaders recognise that there is also more work to do to ensure pupils secure the important skills to read and write more accurately.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum. They ensure that it is broad and well structured, and reflects leaders' careful consideration of the school's unique context. Leaders select topics and activities that enhance pupils' engagement and learning. For example, Year 2 pupils deepen their knowledge of Skegby's mining heritage through coal mining 'hook days'. Pupils across the school develop a love of reading through their visits to the local library. They love to spend time in the school's inviting library, sharing books with their friends.

Leaders accurately understand the school's teaching priorities. They use this information to inform ongoing improvements and staff training. Staff have secure subject knowledge and ensure that pupils enjoy their learning. They adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they can access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders' actions to address the poor attendance of some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have not led to improvement quickly enough. The school is working with external agencies to improve pupils' attendance, but this work is in its infancy, and the impact is yet to be seen. Similarly, more time is needed for the impact of leaders' work to

strengthen the consistency of teaching, particularly in writing, to be seen in pupils' achievement.

Leaders understand the context of the school and the challenges it faces. They use their clear understanding of the needs of pupils, families and the community to shape the school's priorities for improvement. At the heart of the school is leaders' thoughtful attention to each pupil's unique circumstances and needs. Leaders ensure that staff receive relevant training, so that they can support the wide range of pupils' needs well.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working here and the support they receive to manage their workload. The collaborative and supportive environment contributes to high staff morale. Leaders have staff wellbeing at the forefront of their minds when introducing any changes.

Governors support and challenge leaders in equal measure. Like staff, they share the same determination that every pupil is valued for who they are, and that they belong and thrive both academically and socially.

Leaders place great value on their relationships with parents and carers. Parents express high levels of trust in the school's leadership. One comment, typical of many, stated that the school 'goes above and beyond to help the pupils here'.

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

This is a school where care, support and nurture are abundant. From the moment children enter the Nursery Year, they develop a strong sense of belonging that builds their confidence as learners. The early years provision has a delightful, homely feel, enabling children to explore and learn with enthusiasm. Across the school, pupils enjoy their lessons, often describing them as 'fun'. This positive engagement supports pupils' progress through a broad and well-sequenced curriculum. However, pupils are not consistently supported well enough to secure the essential knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and spelling. Staff do not routinely address errors in pupils' written work, which hinders pupils' achievement.

The school's inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are fully involved in day-to-day school life. Pupils in 'The Nest' benefit from bespoke support in an engaging environment that supports their needs very well.

Relationships across the school are strong. Pupils treat each other with respect, get on well together and feel valued by staff. Bullying is rare, and pupils trust staff to respond quickly and effectively to any concerns. They feel safe because staff know them well and prioritise their welfare. Behaviour is a strength, and pupils show pride in their school community. Attendance, however, remains too low for some pupils, limiting their access to the full curriculum and wider experiences.

Beyond academic learning, pupils benefit from rich opportunities that broaden their horizons. From trips to the seaside and local farms, to sports and jewellery clubs, there is something for everyone at this school. The school council makes a valuable contribution to the

community through litter-picking, and many pupils sing in local residential homes for the elderly. This helps to develop pupils' growing understanding of responsibility and kindness, and what it means to be an active citizen.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school, so that pupils' gaps and misconceptions are addressed effectively, particularly in early reading and writing, enabling pupils to achieve as well as they can across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that their work consistently improves pupils' attendance and reduces rates of persistent absence.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen their oversight of the school's work so that their actions lead to more rapid improvement, particularly around pupils' achievement, attendance, and teaching.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Louise Knott.

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 were aware during this inspection of a serious incident involving a child who used to attend this school that had occurred since the previous inspection. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' evaluations.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice chair of governors and met with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jayne Renshaw

Lead inspector:

Kirsty Norbury, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sylvie Newman, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Adair, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

198

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

180

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)

49.35%

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

1.52%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.67%

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

Well 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).

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)	8.4%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.4%	5.9%	Above

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)	32.8%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	23.0%	16.2%	Above

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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