

Kimpton Primary School

Address: High Street, Kimpton, Hitchin, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8RB

Unique reference number (URN): 117118

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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders make regular attendance a priority. They make it clear to pupils and families why being in school every day matters. Attendance across the school is now high. Leaders act quickly when individuals or groups need extra help. They work closely with families to understand any barriers and provide targeted support. Where appropriate, the school provides practical solutions that enable pupils to attend school daily. For others, leaders focus on creating a positive start to the day so pupils feel ready and motivated to attend. The school's determined approach has secured clear improvements in attendance, especially for specific groups of pupils.

High expectations and consistent routines help pupils to stay focused and engaged in lessons. They listen attentively, value each other's contributions and show positive attitudes. Positive relationships between staff and pupils mean that every pupil has an adult to talk to. When concerns arise, staff address them quickly. They follow the behaviour policy consistently and give tailored support to any pupil who needs help to meet the school's expectations.

Pupils behave respectfully, show consideration for others and move around the school politely. This creates a calm, purposeful environment, where pupils thrive.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Staff organise the Nursery and Reception provision thoughtfully. They build positive relationships with children and know their needs well. Children engage purposefully in the activities they choose. Staff use their professional knowledge to interact with the children in timely and deliberate ways. This deepens children's learning even further and actively encourages their independence.

Staff shape the curriculum around children's interests, using themes, such as 'people who help us', to broaden their experiences. This approach encourages parents and carers to visit the classroom, including a recent visit from a dad who works as a builder. This visit inspired a group of girls to create their own building site in the outdoor area. They spent time building a wall with real focus and imagination. Staff use a range of effective approaches to communicate with parents. This helps to strengthen learning opportunities at home.

Staff have a determined focus on teaching the building blocks of reading, writing and mathematics. For example, during morning work, Nursery children practise letter formation alongside the class teacher, while Reception children take part in small-group writing activities. The phonics scheme emphasises pace and repetition and keeps children actively engaged. Well organised, language-rich environments and purposeful staff and child interactions further strengthen early reading and writing.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils secure the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of education. This is particularly the case in the early years, where children develop their skills in language and communication well. Leaders recently prioritised number because previous outcomes in the multiplication check and at the end of key stage 2 showed this needed strengthening. Their swift action is already improving pupils' mathematical confidence. Reading, particularly phonics, remains a long-standing strength of the school.

Across the curriculum, pupils generally show appropriate knowledge and skills. They enjoy discussing their learning, especially when topics capture their interest. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 spoke enthusiastically about the Roman invasion of Britain.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged receive carefully planned support and interventions. Staff use these effectively. These pupils make secure progress and move to the next stage of education with increasing confidence.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They use this knowledge to help teachers to improve their practice through high-quality training. Recently, for example, leaders provided training on using assessment more effectively. Staff continue to develop this so that they can check what pupils understand and use this to guide their teaching.

Leaders design the curriculum carefully for each subject and year group. They set clear end points that build in a well-ordered way on prior learning. Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well. The curriculum sets out clearly the relevant subject-specific vocabulary that pupils need to know. Staff use what they know about pupils' starting points and needs to ensure that pupils learn well.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn the important knowledge that they need to be able to read, write and use mathematics fluently. Leaders have recently placed greater emphasis on oracy. This added focus ensures that pupils develop the spoken language that they need to discuss their learning purposefully.

Where needed, the school offers timely and targeted support for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can learn well.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately when they join the school. They ensure that pupils receive timely support so they can access school life and the curriculum confidently. This includes help for pupils to attend regularly and appropriate resources to support them to access the curriculum. Leaders understand each pupil's circumstances. This enables them to remove barriers to learning effectively.

Leaders draw on clear evidence to shape their pupil premium strategy. They select approaches that meet pupils' specific needs well. Staff understand these approaches because leaders provide purposeful training. This strengthens staff confidence and consistency. Leaders track pupils' progress closely and intervene swiftly when pupils show signs of falling behind. As a result, most pupils make the progress expected of them.

Staff work closely with families to put timely and relevant support in place. Positive relationships enable everyone to understand pupils' needs and help to engage parents and carers. When pupils require additional help from external agencies, including counselling, health services or specialist education support, staff coordinate this effectively so that everyone works towards the same goals.

Leaders use alternative provision very effectively. They select provision that meet individual pupil's needs closely. Pupils' educational experiences improve as a result.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and precise understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They set focused improvement priorities and take effective action to drive progress and secure positive outcomes for pupils. Leaders continue to develop their approaches to checking the impact of their work on curriculum improvement.

Governors work closely with school leaders and generally share a clear view of the school's strategic direction. They have supported leaders consistently through periods of change. This has ensured stability during leadership transitions. Governors' commitment has helped the school to maintain momentum.

Leaders place pupils at the centre of every decision. They demonstrate a strong commitment to families and consistently go above and beyond to remove barriers to accessing learning. Leaders prioritise building high-quality relationships with pupils and their families. This helps them identify the right support at the right time.

Leaders model high expectations and professionalism, creating a culture where staff hold similarly high aspirations for pupils. They make sure staff feel valued, supported and involved in shaping the school's strategic direction. Staff receive high-quality training based on evidence-informed practice. Leaders work collaboratively with colleagues, partner schools and external professionals to provide the right balance of support and challenge.

Leaders also give careful attention to staff wellbeing and workload. They ensure clarity of purpose behind all tasks and decision-making. This enables staff to focus on what makes the greatest difference for pupils. This approach strengthens morale and supports sustained school improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development programme is coherent and well sequenced. It extends across the curriculum and enriches pupils' wider experiences. Leaders plan this programme with clear purpose to ensure that it develops pupils' character, confidence and cultural understanding over time. Leaders work closely with external agencies to deepen this

learning even further. Older pupils explore issues, such as prejudice and discrimination. These experiences strengthen pupils' understanding of fairness and encourage positive attitudes towards others. They also build on the cultural diversity work established in earlier years, including long-standing links with an international school that broaden pupils' world views.

The pupil parliament helps pupils to understand democracy as one of the fundamental British values. Pupils elect representatives, who influence real decisions, such as selecting the key stage 1 friendship bench and contributing to the headteacher recruitment process. In this way, pupils learn that their opinions matter.

Pupils develop practical life skills through purposeful opportunities, such as learning to ride a bicycle and taking part in residential visits. Staff structure these experiences carefully. This enables pupils to gain confidence gradually, beginning with one-night stays and progressing to longer residentials by Year 6. Leaders ensure every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can participate in these important experiences.

From the moment children start in the early years, staff help them feel safe, known and secure. As pupils get older, they learn about emotions, healthy relationships and mental wellbeing. They understand how to maintain supportive friendships online and offline. When pupils need extra guidance, staff provide timely, tailored support so that every pupil feels included, valued and understood.

Leaders ensure all pupils have access to a wide range of visits and community based opportunities. These experiences connect pupils to local organisations and broaden their understanding of civic roles. They nurture teamwork, empathy and responsibility.

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

This is a small, happy and friendly school, where everyone receives a warm welcome. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They attend regularly. They generally find their learning fun. Pupils particularly enjoy playing tag with their friends on the playground. They respect each other and learn to understand each other's differences. Pupils deepen this understanding further through links with an international school. They learn about different festivals in assemblies as well as through the work they complete in lessons.

In lessons, pupils listen well and contribute to discussions. They talk confidently about their learning and share what they plan to do next. Staff provide additional support or make adjustments in the classroom for any pupils who need it. This approach ensures that pupils make progress through the curriculum. Staff carefully design pupils' work so that they can embrace learning opportunities outdoors. This develops pupils' ability to collaborate and their resilience.

Pupils support and care for each other. They celebrate each other's successes, whether that is answering a question correctly in class or winning a football match. Pupils know that there are staff who they can turn to if they need help with their learning or other matters. Pupils know that staff respond swiftly to any issues, including the rare cases of bullying. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils develop responsibility and leadership in their school community through classroom roles and the elected pupil parliament. Year 6 pupils take on extra responsibilities, such as play leaders and peer mediators. They encourage games at playtime and support their peers to resolve any disagreements. Pupils contribute to their local community through a range of activities, including theatre projects, arts festivals and volunteering with local charities. As a result, pupils become positive, respectful members of the community. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed their approaches to checking the impact of their work to improve the curriculum.
 - Leaders should further support staff to develop their use of assessment to check pupils' understanding and inform their teaching.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Andrew Lawrence and Mike Newman.

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.

The headteacher became the substantive headteacher in November 2025.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior staff, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents and carers during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body and the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision, which is unregistered.

Headteacher: Ms Kim Swash

Lead inspector:

Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Carley Holliman, 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

145

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

210

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)

16.18%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.76%

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

13.10%

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

Below 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	51%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	71%	Below

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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

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	0%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	36%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	36%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	9%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	0%	68%	-68 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	0%	67%	-67 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	36%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	80%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	78%	-41 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	33%	78%	-44 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	9%	80%	-71 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	79%	-63 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

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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)	6.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	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)	11.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.9%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.7%	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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