

Mill Hill Primary School

Address: Crosby Road, Northallerton, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1AE

Unique reference number (URN): 149551

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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Over time, leaders have overseen improvements in the impact of the school's curriculum. These improvements have helped to embed increasingly secure pupil progress across pupils' time in school. Published outcomes show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically positive. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is particularly worthy of celebration. This group of pupils consistently achieve more highly than their disadvantaged peers nationally. In many instances, they also achieve better than their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. This means that pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary school. Generally, pupils' work is of a high standard. However, there are some pupils for whom the impact of leaders' actions to identify and address barriers to learning is not as evident. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Sometimes, adaptations to learning tasks are insufficient to allow pupils to produce work of a consistently high standard.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Overall attendance is typically close to or above national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that parents and carers and pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Staff make the school a warm and welcoming place that pupils want to come to each day. The school has effective processes for addressing concerns around pupils' attendance. Leaders leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of improving attendance.

Pupils' behaviour is generally positive. Effective adaptations for pupils who may need some additional support minimise instances of less positive behaviour. Older pupils are expected to be role models of behaviour for their younger peers. For example, they help to support pupils in Reception at lunchtime. Interactions between groups of pupils, as well as with adults in school, are warm and nurturing. Pupils develop a keen sense of equality. They understand the impact of discriminatory behaviour. This helps to create a tangible culture of respect and tolerance. Pupils display typically positive attitudes to learning. For a small number of pupils where this is not the case, behaviour does not disrupt other pupils' learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

From the start of the school's 2-year-old provision to the end of Year 6, leaders have adopted an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. This curriculum sets out a pupil's journey across different subjects and stages of education. Leaders seek to identify and bring about further improvements through their monitoring. Leaders have paid close attention to the transition between early years and key stage 1, for example. Provision across school is typically tailored to need. Pupils benefit from a wide range of positive educational experiences. These prepare pupils effectively for their next stage of education.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum in school. They typically understand how well this is taught. On the whole, well-trained staff with secure

subject knowledge make informed decisions on how to adapt the curriculum or learning tasks to individual needs. From what can often be low starting points, pupils get the support they need to catch up with their peers. However, there are times when staff's checks on pupils' learning and understanding are not secure. This means that staff occasionally do not identify pupils' misconceptions in lessons and adapt teaching to address this. Therefore, some pupils' gaps in basic skills do not close sufficiently swiftly.

Early years

Expected standard 

Over time, the school's early years provision has expanded to incorporate 2- and 3-year-old provision. A carefully planned and sequenced curriculum develops children's readiness for the next stage of learning across all areas of learning. There is a clear focus on personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children of all ages share resources and play cooperatively together. Staff model the key vocabulary of emotions and learning well. Many children use this vocabulary with confidence in the provision. Staff interactions with children tend to be of a high standard. Care practices are well considered and highly effective.

Reading is a key priority. From their earliest days in school, staff immerse children in songs, stories and rhymes. Children develop an appropriate level of phonics knowledge. They demonstrate a willingness to use these skills in their play and mark making. Children also benefit from a well-planned programme of physical development. This helps them to develop the strength, dexterity and stamina necessary to access the wider curriculum, including in their early writing. Children also develop an appropriate understanding of number concepts to help prepare them for Year 1.

Partnership work with parents and carers is highly effective. Parents are very complimentary about the provision their children enjoy.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Mill Hill is a highly inclusive school where pupils are valued. Leaders ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. They know that pupils need to feel a sense of belonging and value before they can learn effectively. The school has developed an effective pastoral support programme that helps pupils of all demographics to be able to thrive. To take account of relatively high levels of pupil mobility over time, leaders have developed typically secure processes for identifying and addressing individual pupils' needs. This ensures that staff support pupils to achieve appropriately, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils in other vulnerable groups. For pupils with SEND, effective review processes and additional support typically allow pupils to make appropriate progress. Staff monitor the interventions in place across school to check impact. They use this information to adjust support and provision as necessary. As a result of an effective and targeted pupil premium strategy, disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well by the end of key stage 2. Leaders engage effectively with parents and carers. Parents are extremely positive about the support offered by school staff and leaders.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context, areas of relative strength and where there are areas that can be improved further. This, alongside robust scrutiny from governors and the trust, helps to inform an accurate and targeted set of priorities for future improvement. This is not to the detriment of staff workload and wellbeing. Leaders seek to reduce barriers to staff workload as much as possible. A programme of ongoing professional development for staff builds expertise over time. This has been crucial to the improvements that leaders have introduced over time. The opening of the school's provision for 2-year-olds has strengthened the effectiveness and impact of the school's early years setting, for example. Early career teachers are supported well and make positive contributions to the school's effectiveness.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their roles and statutory responsibilities with diligence. Governors are knowledgeable and use their experience to challenge and support the school. Oversight from the trust is effective. Governors and representatives of the trust get the information they need to hold school leaders to account. Through a programme of monitoring visits, they check closely the impact of the school's work on the identified priorities for school improvement. With a secure understanding of the importance of inclusion, leaders ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of pupils. This includes pupils with any perceived disadvantage, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders are highly visible throughout the school. Parents and carers appreciate how easily accessible staff are and how leaders engage with them.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

As part of a well-planned programme for pupils' personal development, leaders have created opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural development. For example, regular celebrations of other faiths and religions in school help pupils become tolerant and respectful to others. Pupils develop a strong moral compass, understanding right from wrong. Older pupils talked with secure understanding of the potential risks of discrimination, for example. Effective links with the local police help strengthen this element of the school's work.

All pupils develop a pride in their local community and its heritage. They create art based on the local area, selling this to raise funds. Some of this artwork is on display in the town hall. Leaders work hard to raise pupils' aspirations for future careers through carefully planned visitors to school. For example, representatives of the local bank visit school and promote problem-solving skills and budget planning.

The 'Imaginosity' approach in school provides a range of rich and rewarding activities to help develop pupils' resilience, physical health and mental wellbeing, including mindfulness art, cookery and camping and survival skills. This is supplemented by a range of extra-curricular activities that are tailored to emerging needs. Leaders seek to remove any barriers to participation and specifically target elements of this provision to ensure that as many pupils as possible can participate. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities and those who are otherwise disadvantaged, who get particular benefit from the forest school provision.

Pupils' character development is a key focus for the school. From entry to early years, children's personal, social and emotional development is a firm focus for the school. Older pupils develop an appropriate understanding of British values. For example, they talk eloquently about individual liberty, demonstrating a clear understanding that this does not excuse discriminatory language or behaviour.

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

Pupils at Mill Hill Primary are proud of their school. They are safe and have a very well-developed understanding of why this is so. There is a tangible atmosphere of love, care and happiness throughout the school. Pupils thrive as a result of the inclusive environment that leaders and staff have created. The school's core purpose of pupils being happy is key to the sense of belonging that pupils feel. This is strengthened through positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents and carers. Older pupils take pride in being role models for younger children in early years. They make thoughtful contributions to the 'family' feel in the lunch hall, for example.

Children in the early years provision are happy. They thrive in a positive learning environment. Staff plan interesting and engaging activities for these young children to learn through investigation and play. From their starting points in the school's new provision for 2-year-olds, children make secure progress. Older pupils enjoy their lessons. They speak excitedly about the school's 'Imaginosity' approach to the curriculum, for example. The school seeks to identify and address any barriers to learning for pupils. This ensures that pupils progress effectively through the curriculum. Pupils who are eligible for the government's pupil premium funding make particularly notable progress. Achievement across school is positive. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils understand the school's behaviour expectations. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are typically positive. Where some pupils struggle with their emotions, staff provide effective support. Instances of bullying or poor behaviour are rare. Leaders have established equally high expectations for attendance. As a result, pupils attend school regularly. Pupils develop commendable attitudes to others. They are very well prepared for life beyond the school gates.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers are equipped to consistently and effectively pinpoint pupils' misconceptions and adapt teaching so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed quickly to support future learning.
- Leaders should ensure that the provision for some pupils, including those with special

educational needs and/or disabilities, swiftly and effectively addresses barriers to learning so that these pupils consistently produce high-quality work across the curriculum.

About this inspection

This school is part of Areté Learning Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark McCandless, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jan Linsley.

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 spoke with the headteacher and other school staff, some governors from the school committee, representatives of the trust and the CEO. They also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects.

Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the predecessor school's last inspection. The school converted to become an academy and joined Areté Learning Trust in March 2023. Provision for 2-year-old children opened in September 2025.

Headteacher: Rebecca Bainbridge

Lead inspector:

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jaimie Holbrook, Ofsted Inspector

Ginny Robinson, 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

222

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

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)

52.79%

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

2.70%

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

27.03%

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

Well 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		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	61%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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%	
2024/25 (revised)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	74%	Above
2022/23		73%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	82%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	73%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	76%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	46%	Above
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	62%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	86%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	58%	Above
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	81%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	59%	Above
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	76%	69%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	89%	67%	21 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	76%	81%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	80%	20 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	89%	78%	11 pp
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	81%	81%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	79%	21 pp
2022/23		79%	

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)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	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)	13.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.5%	14.6%	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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