

Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School

Address: Balmoral Close, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 6JA

Unique reference number (URN): 136480

Inspection report: 24 February 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. They are relentless in their drive to ensure that pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning, achieve well. Leaders carefully consider pupils' progress. They ensure that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive timely and effective support to keep up with their peers.

Published outcomes are highly positive in almost all areas. Where this is not the case, leaders have taken swift and effective action. Pupils did not achieve well in the multiplication checks. As a result, leaders have implemented a number of initiatives to support them. For example, the multiplication lunch club provides practical, fun activities for pupils to practise and rehearse their times tables. This is making a positive difference.

Pupils achieve well across the wider curriculum. They make strong progress.

They talk about their learning with confidence. In some subjects, for example art, the work produced is of a very high quality.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders persistently strive to ensure that pupils attend well. They work closely with families to promote positive attendance habits. This has had a clear, positive impact. Expectations are high and understood by all. Attendance checks are regular and rigorous. Staff follow up concerns swiftly and sensitively. When necessary, bespoke support is in place. Attendance for these pupils improves over time. Leaders work well with families to provide help for a smooth daily transition into school. Effective pastoral support ensures that pupils are ready to access their learning. Leaders ensure that pupils want to attend. Pupils enjoy their time in school. Over time, attendance has been significantly above national averages.

Behaviour across the school, in lessons and during social times is positive. Classrooms are calm, orderly and purposeful. Social times are vibrant and engaging. Leaders monitor behaviour patterns judiciously and respond with timely, effective support. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination or bullying. Any incidents are rare. Leaders and staff consistently model appropriate behaviours. Pupils behave very well. When necessary, sensitive adaptations are made to meet the needs of pupils who require help to manage their behaviour. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and understand the high expectations set for them.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They use this information to inform the decisions they make to bring about improvements. For example, leaders refined the curriculum to ensure that the 'Fantastic Fundamentals' were visited daily. This ensures that pupils have additional time to practise their reading, writing and early mathematics daily. Early reading and phonics are

taught with precision, enabling pupils to learn to read effectively and access the wider curriculum.

The curriculum is ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced to build pupils' knowledge over time for different subjects and phases. Pupils are given the opportunity to revisit content. This is consistently well implemented across the school. The curriculum gives pupils the knowledge that they need for their next steps.

Staff teach with strong subject knowledge. They give clear instructions, accurate demonstrations and well-focused questions. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly.

Staff engage in high-quality interactions to develop knowledge and vocabulary for pupils across all areas of learning. As a result, pupils are highly articulate about their learning.

Leaders ensure that staff have the skills and support to adapt the curriculum consistently for pupils who may face barriers to learning and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Early years

Strong standard 

Children in the early years benefit from a vibrant, purposeful and inclusive learning environment. Partnerships with parents and carers are prioritised. Staff work quickly to get to know every child well. Effective routines are securely established. As a result, children feel safe, behave well and make secure progress from their individual starting points.

The curriculum is well structured and clearly sequenced. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well taught across early years. They make changes to improve provision as appropriate, for example when developing the outdoor learning provision.

Early reading, writing and number skills are taught daily, with opportunities to rehearse this knowledge through play. Staff check learning carefully so that children build their knowledge and develop their vocabulary. Staff engage in high-quality interactions. Their expectations of the way that children use language and vocabulary are high. This was particularly evident during the 'forest schools' session, when children were talking about the flowers and the patterns of the leaves. Children develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They have the confidence to explore and learn independently.

Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify children who face barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Children secure the foundational knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders are committed to meeting the needs of every pupil. Pupils' individual needs are identified and assessed effectively. Leaders reduce barriers to learning through highly effective support. This includes an array of adaptations that enable pupils to fully access the learning with their peers. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils who find learning the hardest benefit from high-quality, inclusive teaching. This is particularly evident with the work with 'the hub', where bespoke programmes support pupils effectively to build the skills and knowledge to learn with their peers.

Staff benefit from high-quality training that supports them to better understand pupils' needs. Parents and carers engage in workshops run by the school to support their understanding too.

Effective systems help staff to consistently provide timely and appropriate support for pupils. Leaders seek support from external agencies and work closely with parents.

Across all groups of pupils, leaders monitor pupils' progress diligently and assess the impact of interventions and support strategies. This thoughtful, proactive approach ensures that pupils who may face barriers to their learning are well supported and able to succeed. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils with additional needs. As a result, they develop independence and have the skills and knowledge to excel.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a productive, positive and inclusive culture in the school. They have an astute understanding of the priorities for development to ensure the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils. They take timely action to improve areas for development, for example in ensuring that all pupils develop confidence and speed when learning their times tables. Leaders' decisions are in the best interests of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who face additional barriers. They want all pupils to succeed personally and academically.

Leaders ensure that staff feel valued and supported. Staff appreciate how leaders support them to develop as professionals. They value the support and collaborative networks across the trust.

Leaders take thoughtful steps to support staff's workload and wellbeing. They appreciate how leaders provide additional support and protected time when needed.

Governors carry out their statutory duties with diligence. They hold leaders to account and maintain a clear focus on pupils' needs. They listen carefully to the views of parents, carers and staff. They know the school very well.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, forge constructive relationships beyond the school so that they can successfully engage and work in partnership with parents and the local community. They share good practice with other schools, for example the success of 'The Hub'. The partnerships with parents are overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of parents express confidence in the school, value the wider offer and appreciate the strong relationships staff build with their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The promotion of pupils' personal development and wellbeing is a strength of the school. Leaders rightly report that 'the arts are the beating heart of the school'. This is evident in the

wider opportunities in music, art and drama. In addition to this, interest and talents are nurtured in sports, where pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils are proud of their leadership roles. They talk about the importance of helping the younger children. 'Equity Ambassadors' play a key role in helping all pupils to understand the importance of the Equality Act. Pupils share examples of how the equity ambassadors support pupils to make the right decisions, for example encouraging boys to invite girls to play football. Pupils demonstrate a depth of understanding of fundamental British values and the diverse communities that make up modern Britain. They know about cultural diversity, healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe when using social media. They demonstrate strong social skills and work together well.

Pupils benefit from a carefully planned programme that promotes character, resilience and an understanding of the world beyond Towcester. They reflect on their opinions and beliefs, and they show respect for others' values.

High-quality pastoral support means that pupils have the necessary skills to develop the independence and confidence to work and learn with peers. This impacts significantly upon those who need it. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are very well prepared for their next steps. Pupils are supported through targeted interventions effectively. This includes sensory sessions and building trust, resilience and self-esteem through the 'Trust programme'. Pupils with a range of needs receive consistently high-quality help that enables them to thrive.

Leaders meticulously track provision and adapt support when needed. They ensure that all pupils access the broad and exciting offer.

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

At Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School, there is a strong sense of belonging. Pupils are valued, respected and known well by staff. Staff build warm and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils show respect and care for one another. They thrive in a culture that supports them to achieve well. They say that they are proud of their school. School is a fun and enjoyable place to be. As a result, pupils attend well.

Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour. Pupils rise to the challenge and behave well. They understand that some pupils might need extra help with their behaviour. They respect and support this.

Bullying is rare, but when concerns arise, staff act swiftly to provide the right support. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They engage enthusiastically with an exciting curriculum that has been well planned. Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning. They make learning fun. Pupils want to do well. They take pride in their work.

Staff swiftly identify barriers to learning for pupils. They share skills and knowledge to help one another to provide the best possible support for pupils. The approach of 'be brave, be

strong, we have the tools' enables staff to be creative and to provide effective tailored support. As a result, most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well.

Pupils benefit from a plethora of clubs, visits, residentials and wider opportunities to broaden their experiences. They excel in the performing arts and in sporting events.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, particularly those who may otherwise miss out, can take part fully in activities. Pupils develop a deep understanding of what it means to be part of a respectful and considerate community. They are well prepared for life beyond the primary school.

Next steps

- Leaders should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should continue to build on the many successes, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of The Hawksmoor 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, Andrea Curtis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Falvey.

The chair of the local board of governors in this school is John Allen.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, trustees and governors, including the chairs of the trust and local governing body. They also spoke to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff and a wide range of pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The headteacher has been in his substantive post since September 2024.

Headteacher: Joseph Fulford

Lead inspector:

Donna Chambers, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Caroline Evans, Ofsted Inspector

Ann Davey, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Wicken, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

421

Above 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

420

Above 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)

6.89%

Well 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

2.14%

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

9.50%

Below 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)

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	75%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	92%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
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	92%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	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
Latest 3 year average	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	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	60%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	40%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	58%	Below

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	75%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	35%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	78%	-23 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	40%	78%	-38 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	78%	-61 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	77%	-33 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	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	79%	-13 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	67%	79%	-13 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)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.6%	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)	7.0%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright