

Vane Road Primary School

Address: Vane Road, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 5RH

Unique reference number (URN): 149738

Inspection report: 19 May 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 achieve well. By the time pupils leave Vane Road, their attainment across a range of subjects is secure. Pupils' scores for reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of Year 6 are above the national average. This means that pupils are ready for learning at secondary school. Disadvantaged pupils also attain well, achieving grades that are often higher than disadvantaged pupils nationally. These pupils score particularly well in mathematics. Pupils in Year 1 regularly achieve above the national average in the phonics screening check.

Across the school, pupils develop their vocabulary, handwriting, spelling and oracy appropriately. This sustained progress is reflected in their results in the English spelling, punctuation and grammar test in 2025, which were significantly above average, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' knowledge of a few subjects in the wider curriculum is less embedded. Leaders are now focused on developing these subjects at school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' attendance and punctuality, and pupils enjoy attending school. Leaders check pupils' attendance daily and follow up any concerns. The school's systems to promote regular attendance are understood by staff and pupils. Leaders work effectively to support pupils who have gaps in their attendance. As a result, attendance is consistently above the national average for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Few pupils are persistently absent.

Pupils behave calmly in class and move around the school purposefully. Unkind words are rare and discriminatory language is not heard. Pupils know that any issues with bullying are quickly dealt with by adults. Pupils are eager to learn, take pride in their work and interact well with others. Pupils trust adults to care for them. This helps them to feel safe and supported.

Leaders confirm that, in the past, sometimes learning in classrooms has been less focused. New spaces, such as the 'nurture room' and the 'rainbow room' help individual pupils with specific needs to focus. These spaces also support pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. As a result of all of this work, pupils across the school are focused in class.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the curriculum and teaching at school. They have successfully developed the curriculum in several areas, including phonics, writing and mathematics. The curriculum in the early years has also been renewed. All this work has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Leaders are aware that the curriculum thinking in other subjects is less well defined.

The curriculum is generally taught well and teaching is purposeful. Teachers question pupils effectively and model activities well. Leaders have implemented whole-school teaching routines that help pupils to learn new skills with the right amount of support before becoming independent. This ensures consistency in teaching across classrooms and is successful in the main. Teachers check for pupils' understanding regularly. However, they do not consistently use this information to move pupils' learning forward effectively.

Pupils' key knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, including in handwriting and arithmetic, is prioritised. Reading is well taught and pupils' spoken English is advanced for their age. Teachers benefit from high-quality training that strengthens their subject knowledge.

Teachers know pupils' learning needs well. Typically, they adapt teaching effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. The curriculum is ambitious and thoughtful. Leaders have introduced a 'five-a-day' programme to ensure that children are exposed to language-rich experiences. Stories, poems, nursery rhymes and songs are prioritised. The curriculum is well taught.

The new Nursery class is working well. Staff gather all of the important information that they need about children when they first start at the school so that these children settle in as quickly as possible. Staff then tailor activities and learning accordingly to meet children's needs. Relationships with parents and carers are positive. The school makes sure that parents are kept well informed of how their children are progressing.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for. In some cases, they access a personalised curriculum that closely matches their needs. The phonics programme is well delivered. Through this, children quickly secure the knowledge that they need to read.

Children show many effective characteristics of learning. For instance, they readily take turns and listen to each other's suggestions when playing together. Children quickly learn to follow the school's routines and become independent and resilient. They are happy and feel safe. By the time that they leave Reception, the majority of children are ready for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff know pupils as individuals. Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. The help that these pupils need is clearly documented and easy for staff to access. This includes advice and guidance from external specialists. Typically, teachers use this information to help shape resources and classroom activities. This helps adults to reduce or remove any barriers to learning that these pupils face.

Leaders have developed additional spaces in the school that help to meet the specific needs of some pupils with SEND. These spaces typically ensure that these pupils engage more effectively in their learning than they have done previously.

Leaders use additional funding to effectively support disadvantaged pupils and those with other barriers to their learning. This includes guidance for service children, who receive additional support if necessary. Leaders keep a close eye on the progress of pupils and check that the support they receive has the desired impact. Other vulnerable pupils also receive effective academic and pastoral help so that they engage fully in their learning. This includes those known (or previously known) to social care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. There has been a focus on developing aspects in the early years, and the new Nursery Year is working well. Development of the curriculum for phonics, mathematics and writing has also been successful. Leaders know where there is work still to do and continue to develop the school.

Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties effectively and know the school well. Governors and trustees work intelligently to provide leaders with the support and challenge needed to drive the school forward. 'Curriculum impact challenge meetings' help them to know what is working and what needs further focus.

Staff access an effective evidence-informed professional learning programme. The 'teaching compass' programme helps staff to develop their practice. This includes a focus on teaching pupils with different needs. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing. Staff report that there is an open and supportive culture among colleagues.

Leaders focus on the most vulnerable pupils at the school. They are constantly mindful of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school also welcomes service children and meets their pastoral needs.

Leaders continually develop relationships with parents and carers, and the local community. This is an area where they plan to strengthen communication further.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a coherent programme for personal development that extends across the curriculum and wider school life. Through personal, social, health and emotional education lessons and assemblies, most pupils develop their knowledge well. Relationships and health education is delivered sensitively and is age-appropriate. This helps pupils to understand how to keep safe, stay healthy and protect their wellbeing. Children in the early years also develop their social skills through the personal development programme. This is tailored for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, where needed.

Pupils benefit from experiences that develop their leadership skills. Pupils have the opportunity to be young leaders, join the school nutrition action group, act as pupil ambassadors across the trust, or deliver assemblies. These activities develop pupils' confidence and resilience.

The personal development programme also ensures that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the importance of key concepts, such as democracy and the rule of law. They know that everyone is different and that it is important to accept and care for

each other. Most pupils remember what they are taught. However, their knowledge is not secure across the whole curriculum. For example, pupils are taught about the key features of major world religions, but do not remember as much as they might.

The school provides a wide programme of trips and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to attend. Sports provision is extensive. Pupils regularly take part in and win sporting competitions. Clubs such as athletics and cross country are popular. Beyond this, musical theatre club, mindfulness and yoga develop pupils' talents and interests. Everyone can participate in these activities.

Careers education is high quality. Leaders organise for a variety of visitors to come into the school and speak to the pupils, bringing this programme to life. Pupils learn about apprenticeships, and some questioned their local member of parliament. Others learned about careers in engineering.

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

Leaders encourage pupils to be respectful, resilient and kind here. They are ambitious for pupils, and ensure that the school is inclusive for all. Pupils typically achieve well here, academically and socially. By the end of Year 6, they have secured grades in reading, writing and mathematics that are above the national average. This includes disadvantaged pupils, who also achieve well. Pupils leave as confident, rounded young people.

Children in the early years also make appropriate progress. Staff prioritise vocabulary and language, which develops children's speaking skills. Teaching in the new Nursery Year is high quality.

The personal development programme is informative and varied. Pupils experience many opportunities. As pupil leaders, they can present in assemblies and act as ambassadors for the trust. The pupil-led school nutrition action group encourages pupils to eat healthily. Leaders also prioritise sport and organise many clubs for pupils.

In the main, pupils behave well. They feel safe in school, attend well and say that bullying is rare. Unkind words are not used. Pupils focus in classrooms and move around the building calmly. Those pupils who need help to focus receive effective specialist support. Some parents report that this has not always been the case in the past. As a result of positive changes that have been made recently to improve learning in classrooms, pupils experience a calm learning environment.

Teaching is generally purposeful. Teaching of phonics, writing and mathematics is particularly effective in school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support that they need.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that checks on pupils' learning are used consistently to identify gaps in pupils' understanding and to inform subsequent teaching.
 - Leaders should ensure that the curriculums for the foundation subjects are ambitious, well-sequenced and effectively taught so that pupils' attainment in these subjects is as high as in other subjects. This includes pupils experiencing disadvantage and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding of major world faiths.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Lingfield Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nick Blackburn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Lancashire.

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 senior leaders, members of the central team, the director of education for the trust and those responsible for governance during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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

The head of school is Gemma Howe.

Executive headteacher: Kieran Pavey

Lead inspector:

Michael Wardle, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nick Coates, Ofsted Inspector

Steven Holmes, His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Mitchinson, 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

414

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

440

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)

23.91%

Close to 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

3.14%

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

15.70%

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

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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	72%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	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 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	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 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	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 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	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 (final)	59%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	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 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
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 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	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 (final)	82%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	59%	Close to average
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 (final)	59%	69%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	67%	-7 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 (final)	71%	81%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	80%	-12 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 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	78%	-2 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 (final)	82%	81%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	79%	-11 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 (3 term)	3.9%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	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 (3 term)	4.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.6%	14.6%	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.

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