

Shincliffe CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Address: Beal Walk, High Shincliffe, Shincliffe C of E Primary School, Durham, County Durham, DH1 2PN

Unique reference number (URN): 114229

Inspection report: 6 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is high due to leaders' sustained and strategic focus on this aspect of school life. Notably, this includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the past, persistent absence for this group of pupils was too high. As a result of leaders' actions, and effective engagement with parents and carers, this has decreased dramatically. Through a rigorous tracking and monitoring process, leaders identify any barriers to regular attendance. Support is used to improve attendance where needed.

Leaders set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils and staff model and reflect these expectations. Staff and pupils alike are highly respectful. Pupils demonstrate polite manners and positive attitudes towards one another. Their empathy towards those pupils with any additional needs is remarkable. On rare occasions where behaviour is less positive, staff respond through a pastoral approach that improves behaviour. Where necessary, staff make adaptations to help pupils manage their emotions. Bullying is rare. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They know that it will be dealt with effectively if it occurs. Instances of discrimination are equally rare. Staff deal with these swiftly and effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff tailor the school's personal development programme to provide pupils with the experiences and skills they need. This enables pupils to contribute positively to the school and the wider community. Morality and social understanding are developed across the school. For example, children in early years understand the difference between right and wrong. As a result, they play together in harmony and share resources well.

Visits to different places of worship, such as a Hindu temple or the local cathedral, enhance pupils' understanding of spirituality. Regular visits to museums strengthen pupils' cultural development. Leaders use the local area to help pupils broaden their understanding of the wider world.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships education in school. They clearly articulate the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils gain an insightful awareness of how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the wider community.

As pupils progress through school, their understanding and articulation of fundamental British values is increasingly secure. Older pupils understand that individual liberty does not give people the freedom to act without regard for others or the law, for example. They link this to the protected characteristics and understand the risks of discrimination and stereotyping.

Leaders and staff create a supportive environment where pupils with different levels of need are included. For example, leaders use pupil voice to remove barriers to pupil participation in after-school clubs. Pastoral support helps to meet pupils' needs. It makes significant

contributions to pupil wellbeing and to the overall sense of peace and harmony throughout the school.

Leaders also seek to develop pupils' aspirations for the future. They plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to gain exposure to a wide range of different careers. This helps pupils to consider future pathways.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically achieve well at Shincliffe. Published outcomes compare favourably with national figures. Over time, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have improved in reading and mathematics as a result of leaders' actions. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also typically achieve well from their starting points. They make expected progress across the curriculum. Pupils with identified vulnerabilities make progress from their starting points.

As a result of leaders' focus on pupils developing a secure base of foundational knowledge, pupils are prepared for the next stage of education. Children leaving early years have the knowledge and skills in reading, writing and number to access the Year 1 curriculum with confidence. Older pupils are ready for the move to secondary school by the end of Year 6.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders evaluate the quality of the curriculum and pupils' learning with a clear and strategic focus. They focus on younger pupils' development of secure foundational knowledge in English and mathematics, which prepares them for future learning. Pupils' secure phonics knowledge means that reading is not typically a barrier to accessing the wider curriculum.

Over time, leaders and staff have developed engaging curriculum content across subjects and year groups. This allows pupils to revisit learning and remember it over time. For example, pupils draw on their prior learning to evaluate what pictorial sources tell them about the past.

Pupils who have gaps in their basic skills receive support to address these gaps. Over time, they become less reliant on additional support. In lessons, staff adapt their approach so pupils who need support can take part in learning.

Teaching is typically effective, although there is some variation in how well it supports pupils' learning. At times, tasks are not well chosen to help pupils make progress within a lesson. These instances are in the minority, but remain an area that leaders continue to address.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the importance of the early years. They ensure that children learn in a supportive environment that places emphasis on wellbeing and welfare. Leaders work closely with external nurseries to support children's transition into the Reception class. Staff create a supportive environment that places emphasis on children's wellbeing and welfare. As a result, children are overwhelmingly happy. They enjoy showing adults around their setting. Children with additional needs or vulnerabilities receive support that meets their needs. Inclusive practices seen elsewhere in the school begin in the early years provision.

Leaders focus on ensuring that high-quality provision is embedded throughout the setting. A detailed and well-sequenced curriculum gives children the opportunities they need to develop a secure base of foundational knowledge. Children make suitable progress during their year in Reception. They are well prepared for the move to Year 1.

Children accurately use their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Their vocabulary develops as a result of being immersed in a rich environment full of stories and songs. Staff reinforce this vocabulary through children's exploration and play. At times, the interactions between adults and children vary in quality. Leaders are aware of this. They have begun to put systems in place to improve these interactions.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Over time, leaders have created a safe and inclusive school environment. Pupils with varying levels of need or vulnerability access opportunities to achieve and participate in school life. This includes pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those known to social care. Leaders use external expertise as part of the wider support offer across the school.

Leaders provide targeted professional development so staff can identify pupils' needs. A consistent process of review is embedded across the school. As a result, staff regularly assess and adjust support for pupils. This work reduces barriers to learning for pupils over time.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is low. Leaders use pupil premium funding to support these pupils' academic and pastoral needs so that they can access learning and wider school life. Staff provide support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that is matched to their identified needs. Pupils work towards the targets set out in their support plans.

Across the school, pupils with barriers to learning or wellbeing access learning that is typically matched to their age and starting points. Where more tailored provision is required, staff plan this carefully so it meets pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders evaluate the school's work and understand its strengths. Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has worked effectively to address areas that needed further

work. Leaders have an accurate picture of where there are areas in school that can be improved further. They are open, honest and receptive to challenge. Leaders make decisions in the interests of pupils. Leaders take account of the latest research when evaluating areas for further improvement. They work closely in partnership with the local authority, other schools and external agencies to help make further improvements across the school.

Leaders take a strategic approach to staff's professional development. This is carefully targeted to have the greatest impact. As a result, staff expertise and confidence increase over time. Staff report that they benefit from this. Leaders help staff to manage their workload and wellbeing.

Governors understand the school's work and their role. They use systems to check the information provided by senior leaders and support and challenge leaders. They understand and fulfil their statutory duties and oversee the school's finances, ensuring that funding is used in the interests of pupils.

Parental engagement is positive. The school seeks to promote meaningful relationships with parents and carers. This has notable impact across many facets of the school's work, including pupils' attendance and the positivity seen at the beginning and end of each day.

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

Pupils at Shincliffe show the school's ethos of 'celebrating the uniqueness of everyone' in their daily interactions. They are proud members of the school community. Pupils show polite manners in their interactions with others. They develop a sense of belonging and feel valued. Highly positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the calm and respectful environment in the school. Pupils of all ages, including children in early years, greet visitors warmly. Older pupils take on responsibilities across the school, including roles on the school council and caring for the herb and fruit planters in the playground.

A wide range of broader opportunities extends pupils' experiences beyond the academic. For example, visits to places of worship, such as a gurdwara, help pupils to deepen their appreciation of other faiths. Residential and after-school clubs give pupils opportunities to develop resilience and explore their talents and interests.

Pupils of all ages enjoy their learning. Staff seek to remove any barriers to learning. This helps pupils to succeed. Pupils talk excitedly about their favourite subjects and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge. From topics such as colour mixing in early years to the Industrial Revolution in key stage 2, pupils develop an increasingly secure base of knowledge. This supports their achievement across the curriculum. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils achieve well across the school, and published outcomes compare favourably to national figures.

Pupils feel safe at Shincliffe. Attendance figures compare favourably to national figures. Pupils' behaviour is a credit to the entire school community. Instances of bullying or

derogatory language are rare. Pupils have confidence that any issues would be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their ongoing work to enhance the quality of staff–child interactions in early years becomes embedded in routine practice.
 - Leaders should ensure greater consistency in how tasks are chosen so that pupils make progress in all lessons.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Daniela Slanickova.

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, other school staff, members of the board of governors and a representative of the local authority.

Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects.

Inspectors spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Durham. Its last section 48 inspection was on 20 November 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Philip Rumbles: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Deborah Ashcroft, Ofsted Inspector

Samuel Donaldson, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

196

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

215

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)

7.65%

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

1.02%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.20%

Below 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	71%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	44%	60%	Below

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	80%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59%	73%	Below

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	87%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	71%	Close to average

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	76%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	93%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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	43%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	57%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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	29%	68%	-39 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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	43%	80%	-37 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	71%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	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.

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)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.9%	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 (3 term)	2.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	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.

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