

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School

Address: Main Road, Deeping St Nicholas, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 3DG

Unique reference number (URN): 120407

Inspection report: 14 July 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 a key priority. Consistent routines help pupils settle quickly and start each day ready to learn. Adapted approaches support those who find frequent attendance or being punctual challenging. Leaders track attendance closely. They identify patterns and trends closely and use clear systems and carefully tailored, timely help when needed. The school works collaboratively with families and external professionals to provide pupils with personalised support. As a result, attendance is improving for pupils who need additional help, and rates of persistent absence continue to fall.

The school is a calm, orderly and welcoming environment, where expectations for behaviour are taught clearly, reinforced consistently and well understood. Pupils are focused, engaged and eager to learn in lessons. Staff respond promptly to any difficulties, preventing issues from escalating and helping pupils to remain successful. Pupils are taught practical strategies to manage their emotions and use these with increasing independence. They demonstrate excellent manners, positive attitudes and growing confidence.

The school provides a safe, inclusive culture in which pupils feel valued and respected. Bullying is rare. Pupils, parents and carers are confident that any concerns will be resolved quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils thrive, both socially and academically.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children make a strong start to their education and settle quickly into school life. Leaders continually refine the provision to ensure that the learning environment is of a consistently high quality. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make strong progress from their starting points and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

The early years curriculum is sequenced carefully and provides rich opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for future success. Communication, language, early literacy and mathematics are prioritised. Reading is a key strength, with phonics taught systematically and reinforced throughout the day. This allows children to develop confidence and fluency as readers.

Staff teach with expertise. They balance direct teaching with opportunities for independent exploration. High-quality interactions, effective questioning and the use of ambitious vocabulary extend children's thinking and strengthen their communication skills. Staff make sure that the curriculum builds effectively on prior learning and help children apply their knowledge in a range of contexts.

Relationships between staff and children are nurturing and respectful. Staff know children well. They create a calm and engaging environment where children feel valued and safe. Learning is adapted to children's individual needs, achievements are celebrated, and all children are included fully, so that they can flourish.

The school's personal development programme is extensive, planned carefully and an entitlement for every pupil. It is designed to reflect the school's context, while meeting pupils' individual needs, interests and aspirations. Leaders ensure that all pupils can access and benefit from the wide range of opportunities available.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences, while developing respect and understanding for others. They learn the difference between right and wrong and demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity. Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values. They understand that the law protects individuals from discrimination and promotes equality. Pupils benefit from a wide range of creative, cultural and social experiences that broaden their horizons and build their confidence. Through educational visits, enrichment activities and community experiences, they develop an in depth understanding of the world around them and of people whose backgrounds and experiences may differ from their own.

A particular strength of the personal development offer is the opportunity for pupils to attend 'Stukeley University', alongside pupils from another school in the Federation. This provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop independence and life skills through activities such as cooking classes, computer animation and other practical learning experiences. Pupils speak highly of these sessions and clearly value the experiences and skills that they gain from them.

Personal, social and health education is delivered effectively and in an age-appropriate way, as is relationships education. Pupils know and understand how to keep themselves safe, including online.

The impact of the personal development programme is evident in the positive experiences and outcomes achieved by all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. It nurtures talents and interests, develops confidence and independence, and provides pupils with a broad range of meaningful opportunities that prepare them well for their next stages of education and adult life.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Typically, pupils achieve well from their starting points. Leaders' work on developing pupils' core knowledge in reading is very effective. At the end of Year 1, outcomes in the phonics screening check are often above national averages. Most pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged, make notable progress with their reading.

Usually, pupils remember what they have learned. They can describe what they learned earlier in the school year with confidence and, in many cases, even further back. However, staff do not ensure that pupils produce high-quality work in some areas of the curriculum.

Pupils typically progress through the school's curriculum and achieve well. Outcomes over time at the end of key stage 2 are typically above national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils make notable progress with their reading and writing. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school. Leaders set high expectations for every pupil and create a culture where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Leaders act swiftly to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and put suitable strategies in place to overcome any barriers to learning. Staff use a range of adaptations to overcome the obstacles that these pupils might face. This approach ensures that these pupils can access the curriculum fully and learn alongside their peers.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the guidance, care and support that they need to feel safe and ready to learn. Leaders use additional funding thoughtfully. They identify barriers and target support carefully. Focused interventions help disadvantaged pupils with their learning and emotional needs. These pupils access a wide range of opportunities to broaden their horizons. Leaders track the progress that disadvantaged pupils make and adjust support when needed. Leaders know they need to further develop how they measure the impact of this support to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as they could.

Leaders work closely with a wide range of external agencies, including the local authority, to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable receive the specialist support that they need to succeed. Help to promote pupils' mental health and wellbeing is particularly effective.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas requiring further development. They make informed decisions that support the best interests of all pupils. Senior leaders have implemented a range of new systems and procedures to bring about improvements. Collaborative work across the federation is contributing positively to the school's ongoing development. Parents and carers express confidence in the school, reporting that their children are happy, secure and well supported.

Leaders have identified appropriate improvement priorities and ensure that staff training is aligned closely to these objectives. The school works effectively with external organisations to provide additional support for pupils with the most complex needs. There is a clear commitment to meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are known, or previously known, to social services.

Governors generally maintain effective oversight of the school's work. They provide both support and challenge, demonstrating a secure understanding of the school's performance and future priorities. They ensure that resources are used effectively and that safeguarding remains a priority. Governors also champion staff wellbeing and seek to minimise

unnecessary workload. Consequently, leadership at all levels across the school continues to improve.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There is some variation in how well the curriculum is delivered. In some classes, teaching allows pupils to learn the curriculum effectively and make progress. However, this is not the case consistently in all year groups. At times, assessment information is not used precisely enough to address pupils' needs. This can result in gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding remaining.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Pupils engage positively with their learning. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically receive appropriate support. This enables them to access the curriculum and participate successfully in learning. Staff place a clear emphasis on developing vocabulary, and phonics is taught consistently well. Opportunities to practise reading across the curriculum help pupils develop confidence and fluency.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of curriculum and teaching strengths and areas needing development. Recent actions to strengthen the curriculum and improve teaching are having a positive impact, helping pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects. Nevertheless, these improvements are not embedded consistently across the school. This means it is too soon to determine the impact of this work.

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

Pupils are proud to attend Deeping St Nicholas Primary School. They are known as individuals and valued as members of a close-knit community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is positive. They are respectful towards one another and work and play together cooperatively. Older pupils willingly support younger children, contributing to the school's family ethos and helping everyone feel that they belong.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Positive relationships between pupils and staff help pupils feel safe, included and supported. Pupils trust staff to help them if they have concerns. Bullying is rare. When friendship issues or incidents do occur, staff address them quickly and effectively. Staff are attentive to pupils' emotional wellbeing and provide thoughtful support that helps pupils develop resilience, confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and speak positively about their experiences. They enjoy taking part in a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom, including sporting events, clubs, music tuition, educational visits and residential experiences. Pupils thrive as a

result of the school's extensive personal development programme that prepares them well for life beyond primary school.

In the early years, children get off to a great start and develop the confidence and independence needed to participate fully in school life. Starting in early years, pupils develop their sense of responsibility through leadership roles, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 achieve well in many aspects of school life. However, the curriculum that they learn is sometimes not planned or delivered consistently well. Sometimes, pupils' needs are not met closely enough. This affects how well some pupils secure their knowledge and when they are ready to move on to the next stage.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned and taught consistently well across year groups and subjects, so that pupils build their knowledge and deepen their understanding across all subjects.
 - Leader should develop detailed and informative methods to quality assure the consistency and effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue their work to ensure that all staff apply the agreed teaching approaches, including checks of pupils' understanding and consistently high expectations of the quality of work in pupils' books, across all subject areas.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Richard Nicholas.

The school is part of a federation called Stukeley Federation.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place from 14 June to 15 June 2026.

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 school leaders, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They also spoke with representatives of the local authority and those responsible for governance during the inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Peter Bellamy.

Head of school: Claire Underwood

Lead inspector:

Richard Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Jayne Ashman, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

68

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

70

Well 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)

29.41%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

1.47%

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

16.18%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	89%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	100%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	79%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	100%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	60%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	57%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average

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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	57%	68%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	64%	78%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 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	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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 (3 term)	2.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.1%	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)	1.6%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.1%	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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