

Darley Primary School

Address: Main Street, Darley, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 2PZ

Unique reference number (URN): 149986

Inspection report: 22 September 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 ●

Leaders place a high priority on attendance. They monitor attendance carefully and respond quickly when concerns arise. Staff work closely with families to understand and remove any barriers that prevent regular attendance. Adults provide highly effective support that reflects pupils' individual circumstances. This helps pupils who may find regular attendance more difficult to attend well. As a result, attendance is consistently above national averages and most pupils benefit fully from school life and learning.

The school is a calm, harmonious and welcoming community. Staff and pupils build highly positive relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Pupils understand what staff expect and consistently meet these expectations. They demonstrate kindness, courtesy and consideration towards others. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger pupils and helping them feel included. Staff use a restorative approach consistently and help pupils understand the impact of their actions. They make appropriate adjustments for pupils who need additional support and help them manage their emotions successfully. Other pupils show empathy and respect towards these differences. Pupils understand that bullying, discrimination and other harmful behaviour are unacceptable. When concerns arise, staff deal with them promptly and effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe, behave exceptionally well and demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils achieve well overall. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They engage positively with learning, speak confidently about what they know and remember and take pride in their achievements.

Most pupils develop the essential knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. They build secure foundations in reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts. This supports future learning. Consequently, most pupils access increasingly demanding learning successfully as they move through school. However, on occasion, some pupils with gaps in their basic writing knowledge do not receive the support they need to catch up on missed learning.

Published outcomes are typically above national figures. Pupils who face barriers to learning or wellbeing, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally make progress from their starting points. Most develop the knowledge and skills they need to move successfully through the curriculum and on to the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

On the whole, leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching well. They use assessment information, pupils' work, lesson visits and discussions with pupils to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They review class organisation carefully and ensure that pupils are supported to continue to build knowledge securely as they move through different class groups.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious and well-planned curriculum. Leaders identify the important knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject and sequence learning carefully. This helps pupils build on what they already know and can do. Staff ensure that pupils develop essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff teach pupils at the early stages of learning to read through phonics. This helps pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to become increasingly confident readers.

Teaching is generally effective. On the whole, teachers use their knowledge of pupils' starting points to plan learning appropriately and help pupils acquire new knowledge. Teachers usually check pupils' understanding and use this information to support learning. Staff make suitable adaptations so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils typically build knowledge securely across the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children benefit from a positive and nurturing start to their education from the age of 2. Staff build warm relationships with children and their families. As a result, children feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Children behave well, engage positively with adults and one another and develop confidence and independence. Staff know children well and provide appropriate support, including for those who need additional help. Consequently, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers participate fully in the early years provision.

The curriculum in pre-school and Reception is broad and effective. Staff identify the important knowledge and skills that children need to learn and provide a range of experiences that support their development. Adults use direct teaching and well-chosen interactions to develop children's language, literacy, mathematical understanding and wider knowledge. They adapt support appropriately to meet children's individual needs. As a result, children achieve well from their starting points and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for learning in Year 1.

Leaders know they need to continue to strengthen the connections between pre-school and Reception so that learning builds progressively across the early years phase. Both curriculums support children effectively. However, opportunities for challenge and independent learning do not always increase consistently as children become older and more knowledgeable.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school is a welcoming community where pupils and families feel valued. Staff know pupils well and work closely with families to understand any barriers to learning or wellbeing. Staff use a range of assessments to identify pupils' needs and understand their strengths and any difficulties they may face. This helps staff provide appropriate support and adaptations when needed.

Staff have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for other pupils who face barriers to learning. Pupils with SEND study the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff adapt learning and provide additional support when needed. Training helps staff understand pupils' needs and identify suitable support. As a result, pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and wider opportunities available at the school.

Staff use pupil premium funding carefully to reduce barriers for disadvantaged pupils. They know these pupils well and tailor support to their individual circumstances.

Staff respond sensitively when pupils' circumstances change. They provide thoughtful support for pupils who face difficulties in their lives, including those who are known or have previously been known to social care. Staff seek advice from other professionals when needed. As a result, pupils receive the support they need to participate fully in school life and learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school and its community well. They understand the school's strengths and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. Leaders have taken purposeful action to improve the quality of education and pupils' wider experiences. They maintain a clear focus on acting in pupils' best interests, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who face other barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Leaders promote a positive and purposeful culture. Staff share leaders' ambition for pupils and value the support they receive. Professional development is informed by evidence and helps staff develop their expertise over time. Staff benefit from opportunities within school and across the trust, including national professional qualifications. Early career teachers receive appropriate support. Leaders take effective steps to manage workload and support staff wellbeing. Staff feel valued and appreciate leaders' consideration of their wellbeing. Appropriate arrangements are in place to protect staff from bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

Parents are positive about the school and value the relationships they have with staff. Leaders work constructively with families, the trust and external partners to support pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

Governors and trustees understand the school's context and provide effective support and challenge. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and maintain an appropriate focus on financial sustainability, staff wellbeing and pupils' interests. Leaders have identified the right

priorities for further improvement. The recent increase in leadership capacity is helping leaders bring greater precision to their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders recognise that further strengthening this aspect of their work will help ensure that initiatives have the greatest possible impact on pupils' experiences and outcomes.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a coherent programme that supports their personal development and wellbeing. Through a planned relationships, health and sex education curriculum, pupils learn about healthy relationships, mental health, online safety and how to keep themselves safe. They understand risks in their local community, including those associated with roads, farming and the river. Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding run throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about different cultures, communities and beliefs and understand the importance of treating others with respect. Staff revisit fundamental British values regularly through assemblies and the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils understand the importance of democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect and the rule of law. Leaders have identified that pupils' understanding of protected characteristics is less secure and have increased opportunities to develop this aspect of learning.

Outside school, some pupils have limited opportunities to encounter people, cultures and communities that differ from their own. Visits, visitors and residential experiences broaden pupils' understanding of modern Britain and help prepare them for life beyond their immediate community. Pupils willingly take on leadership responsibilities as school councillors, buddies and ambassadors. They develop confidence through opportunities to perform, represent the school in sporting events and support younger pupils. Creative, sporting and outdoor learning experiences help pupils develop new interests and skills. These experiences broaden pupils' horizons and help prepare them for the next stage of their education and later life. Staff know pupils and families well and provide effective pastoral support when needed. Pupils trust adults and feel confident seeking help if they have concerns. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, participate fully in school life. Consequently, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and personal qualities they need for life in modern Britain.

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

Pupils are very happy to belong to this welcoming village school. They describe a place where everyone knows one another and where there is a strong sense of community. From their earliest days in the 2-year-old provision, children build warm and trusting relationships with adults and one another. Parents value the way staff know pupils as individuals from the very start of their time in school. Pupils know that adults care about them, listen to them and will help them when needed. The school's commitment to 'keep me safe, make me happy, help me learn' reflects what pupils value most about school. As a result, pupils feel safe and supported.

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. They speak confidently about their work and take pride in their achievements. Pupils who face barriers to learning or wellbeing, including

pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, participate fully in school life and are prepared well for their next stage of education.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They show kindness, courtesy and respect towards others. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger children and helping them feel included. Pupils understand the importance of fairness and respecting difference. Bullying and other unkind behaviour are rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with concerns quickly and effectively. Attendance is high because pupils enjoy school and value being part of its busy daily life.

Pupils broaden their understanding of the world beyond their immediate community through visits, visitors and wider experiences. They value the many memorable opportunities that bring learning to life indoors and outdoors. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, developing new interests and contributing to school life. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, independence and a broader understanding of modern Britain. Pupils are rightly proud to be part of their school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the way they identify priorities and check the impact of their actions so that their improvements make the greatest possible difference to pupils' learning, experiences and future success.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Joanne Robinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jennifer Baynes.

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

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 September 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, the CEO of the trust, the chair of trustees and members of the local governing body. They also spoke with staff, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also runs provision for 2-year-old children under the same registration.

Lead inspector:

Tracy Duffy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Aidan Sadgrove, Ofsted 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

88

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: 268

School capacity

116

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)

20.00%

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: 26.5%

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

0.00%

Well 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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.77%

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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	61%	S
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)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	74%	S
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)	100%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	72%	S
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)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	73%	S
2022/23		73%	

‘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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.1%	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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