

Windhill Primary School

Address: Hollingworth Close, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 0PQ

Unique reference number (URN): 106726

Inspection report: 9 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is a strength of this school. Leaders swiftly identify pupils who face barriers to learning. They work closely with parents and carers to remove barriers and to support pupils well. Pupils with additional needs receive appropriate and timely support as soon as they arrive at the school.

Leaders carefully track each pupil's progress, ensuring that support and interventions are responsive and precise. They regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their provision. Staff receive appropriate training that enables them to identify pupils' needs accurately. As a result of this, interventions are impactful. Carefully considered adaptations enable pupils with barriers to learning to access the full curriculum alongside their peers.

Pastoral support is highly effective for pupils with barriers to their wellbeing. Staff provide consistent emotional and wellbeing support. This enables pupils to successfully regulate their emotions and build resilience, ensuring all pupils are ready to learn. Consequently, pupils facing barriers, including those known to social care and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders make effective use of the additional funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils. This enriches these pupils' experiences and removes barriers successfully. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well because of this.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. They are equally clear and strategic about where further improvements can be made. Leaders monitor the impact of their actions carefully to ensure that every decision impacts pupils positively.

Leaders and governors work together as a team. Governors share leaders' high ambitions. They are highly effective and aware of their statutory duties, including around safeguarding. Governors hold leaders to account while striking the right balance between challenge and support. They ask appropriate questions when they identify any area of the school's work that is not achieving as well as it should.

Leaders have developed an effective culture of professional learning for all staff in the school that is closely linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff access a wide range of both external and in-house training. The staff team is well established. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel central to both the school and the local community. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their wellbeing and workload. When additional tasks are asked of them, leaders ensure that staff are allocated time to complete these. Staff value the respect, care and support that leaders give them. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive.

Leaders work closely with other schools locally. They work with these schools to evaluate the quality of the provision, and they appreciate the reciprocal benefits of this work. Leaders share good practice, particularly around inclusion, across the local authority.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders prioritise a broad personal development curriculum that enriches pupils' experiences beyond their academic studies. Leaders have carefully considered the provision and pupils' access to extra-curricular opportunities. Trips and visitors are purposely planned to include a wide range of experiences. Leaders carefully track participation to ensure that all pupils benefit from what is on offer, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, leaders have recently introduced a calm sensory club for pupils who may find accessing other clubs more challenging. The extra-curricular opportunities reflect pupils' interests and are very well attended. Pupils take part in a vast array of sporting activities and competitions, with many successes. Key stage 2 pupils take part in residential trips, which are highlights of their school experience.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities available to contribute to school life through leadership roles. They particularly enjoy planning clubs that other pupils attend and the opportunity to become the school 'prime minister' in Year 6. Through these experiences, pupils develop the confidence and skills needed to make positive contributions to school life. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' futures. From the Early Years, pupils develop a growing awareness of future careers.

Pastoral support in the school is skilfully planned and delivered. Pupils' wellbeing and behavioural needs are carefully identified. Staff support pupils with expertise, sensitivity and care. Pupils appreciate the support they receive.

The relationships curriculum is carefully planned and age-appropriate. Pupils develop a secure understanding of healthy relationships and mental wellbeing. They learn how to recognise and respond to potential risks and understand how to keep themselves safe, including online and in the local community. Through assemblies, pupils develop a deep understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy, respect and tolerance. They apply this knowledge when voting for school council representatives.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Typically, the school prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. Over time, outcomes in national tests have been close to the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils attain in line with their peers nationally in reading and writing. Their attainment in mathematics is at the expected level and has been consistently above their peers nationally over time. However, attainment in phonics outcomes remains lower than leaders expect. Leaders have identified this accurately and are implementing focused actions to improve the teaching and learning of phonics.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils know and remember important knowledge effectively, apply their learning with increasing confidence and leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. This enables them to achieve well from their individual starting points, developing the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders track attendance closely and intervene early if there are any barriers to attending school. This approach prevents many pupils from becoming persistently absent. Leaders analyse attendance information effectively. They identify emerging patterns well and implement timely and targeted support. As a result, overall attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with national figures. Although attendance for disadvantaged pupils remains below that of other pupils, leaders have secured notable improvements in attendance through effective interventions and partnerships with families. Leaders and staff know families well and use this knowledge to reduce barriers.

Behaviour in school is calm and orderly. Pupils know and understand the behaviour routines and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Supportive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils underpin a culture of respect and belonging. Pupils are welcoming, polite and kind to each other and to staff. Pupils report that bullying is rare. They feel safe and happy because staff respond promptly and effectively to any concerns. Leaders promote an inclusive culture, particularly for pupils who require help with their emotions. Carefully adapted provision helps pupils to feel calm and ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that supports pupils' learning effectively. The curriculum has been designed to ensure that pupils build on what they have learned over time. It is age-appropriate and enables pupils to develop the knowledge and skills expected for their stage of development. References to the locality ensure that the curriculum is relevant to pupils. For example, in history, pupils learn about the important role that mining had on the local area.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of phonics and have recently changed the whole-school approach to this. Generally, pupils develop early reading skills appropriately through identifying sounds and blending them accurately. In mathematics, teachers skilfully use a range of resources to support pupils' learning. As a result, pupils demonstrate increasing accuracy and confidence when completing calculations and solving problems.

Occasionally, opportunities to develop spoken language are missed by staff. Where the teaching of communication skills is less effective, pupils are not sufficiently supported to be able to explain their thinking clearly.

The curriculum and teaching are highly inclusive. Teachers make successful adaptations to teaching, resources and the environment. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well alongside their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from warm and nurturing relationships and a calm learning environment. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is carefully designed and well sequenced to help children build knowledge and develop skills from their individual starting points. Starting in the pre-school class, staff provide clear routines for children that help them to build independence.

Leaders prioritise developing children's early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children use their developing phonics skills to read with increasing accuracy. They are supported well to develop a secure pencil grip. Typically, staff prompt children to develop their language and communication skills during activities. However, this is not consistent in every interaction. As a result, some opportunities to develop children's language and communication skills are missed.

Parents speak positively about the caring ethos and inclusive approach that the school has. Staff know pupils well and quickly identify children with barriers to their learning or wellbeing. They use assessment information carefully to help children develop knowledge and skills across a range of areas of learning. Leaders ensure that children receive focused support to enable them to make positive progress from their starting points. As a result, pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of learning.

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

Pupils are proud to be a part of this caring and nurturing school. They enjoy coming to school because they feel safe, happy and valued. They say that adults know them and their families well. Pupils know that there is always someone to support and listen to them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that school life offers them.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that staff have of their conduct and behaviour. They generally behave well in lessons and move calmly around school. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful, and interactions are positive. At social times, pupils enjoy the outdoor areas and the wide range of activities that are on offer to them. They play together harmoniously and are supported well by staff. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that any issues would be dealt with by staff quickly and effectively.

Pupils' learning extends beyond the classroom. Pupils visit local historical sites when learning about castles, and they visit the seaside when learning about coastal areas in geography. Older pupils attend residential trips where they increasingly develop confidence and independence. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument and have the opportunity to develop these talents further through additional music tuition.

Pupils hold positions of responsibility in school. For example, pupils have opportunities to become school councillors, play leaders and members of the eco-council. The school is central to the local community. Pupils enjoy contributing to the local community through activities such as litter picking and local performances.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, regardless of their starting points. Some pupils have significant barriers to learning. Staff know pupils well and provide carefully considered support to help them overcome these challenges.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that in the early years, continuous provision is consistently well organised and that adults consistently use high-quality interactions to extend learning, so that all children achieve the intended curriculum outcomes.
 - Leaders should ensure that effective opportunities for structured talk and oracy are embedded throughout the taught curriculum.
 - Leaders should support all staff to effectively embed the new approach to teaching phonics.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lynn Mathers.

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

This inspection took place on 9 and 10 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 the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of governors and other representatives of the governing body, local authority representatives, school improvement partners, staff and pupils in the school during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a pre-school provision.

There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Donna Howard

Lead inspector:

Kim Bradshaw, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jenny Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Ben Paxman, 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 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

302

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: 268

School capacity

280

Close to 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)

43.35%

Well above 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

1.66%

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

15.56%

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

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	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

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	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	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	55%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	75%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
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	58%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	52%	62%	Close to average
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	66%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	81%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
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	70%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	88%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	59%	Close to average

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	55%	68%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	69%	6 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
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	58%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	80%	-27 pp
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	66%	78%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	81%	78%	3 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
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	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	88%	81%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	69%	79%	-10 pp

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)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.3%	5.9%	Above

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)	17.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	21.1%	16.2%	Above

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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