

Dovelands Primary School

Address: Hinckley Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE3 0TJ

Unique reference number (URN): 130927

Inspection report: 8 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically learn the knowledge and skills they need across the curriculum to prepare them for the next stage of their education. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both of whom progress well from their starting points.

Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils consistently secure the phonics knowledge they need to read with fluency. This allows them to access the curriculum as they progress through school. However, the proportion of pupils working at a higher standard in writing is below the national average. Leaders have taken action and pupils are developing the skills they need to become more competent writers.

While pupils' progress and achievement in most subjects are positive, there is some variation in a small minority of subjects. Leaders are working to ensure that pupils' achievement is of a consistently high standard in all areas.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have a detailed understanding of matters relating to pupils' attendance and communicate consistently high attendance expectations to parents and carers. Leaders' rigorous analysis allows them to act quickly when pupils' attendance begins to fall. They identify possible barriers to pupils attending often. Leaders have introduced a pastoral breakfast club for some pupils. As a result, pupils' attendance has increased. Leaders provide families with targeted help when needed, including accessing services and support from external professionals. Leaders recognise the need to continue to raise some pupils' attendance so that disadvantaged pupils come to school as often as they can.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They teach pupils the importance of respecting the rights of others. Staff build positive relationships with pupils and apply rules fairly. Pupils strive to earn positive postcards for modelling the school's values. They celebrate each other's differences and show great respect for one another. Pupils do not see bullying as an issue in this school. Discrimination, harassment, abuse or violence are not tolerated. Staff use their expertise to support pupils who are struggling to regulate their emotions. Pupils know how to access quiet spaces around the school when they need them. As a result, pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They take decisive and timely action to bring about improvements. For example, they implemented a new phonics programme that has improved pupils' outcomes. Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They emphasise the teaching of key vocabulary across all subject areas. This is effective in supporting pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to develop their communication and language skills.

Staff teach the phonics programme well. This helps pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need to read with accuracy and fluency. Leaders have rightly prioritised developing pupils' writing so that more pupils achieve higher standards. Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge and present new learning clearly. This helps pupils to connect new learning to what they know already. There is a clear focus on ensuring that pupils secure the key foundations of learning before they move on. This is particularly effective in early reading and mathematics. However, across the wider curriculum, there are some inconsistencies in how well pupils learn.

Pupils facing barriers to learning, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive appropriate support to learn the curriculum well. For instance, teachers typically make effective checks on these pupils' learning and shape support accordingly.

Early years

Expected standard 

The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a flying start. A lot of thought and care has gone into developing learning environments that promote children's curiosity and thirst for learning. Children quickly develop a sense of belonging. Consequently, they feel secure, valued and ready to learn. Clear routines have already been established, despite it being early in the term.

The early years curriculum is designed carefully. It sets out clear learning intentions for each age and stage, helping staff to plan activities that support children's development. Staff typically interact well with children, asking questions and guiding learning. Discussions are extended to deepen children's understanding to ensure that they are prepared for the next stage. Typically, activities include practising early reading and writing, exploring numbers through counting and sorting, and developing language through stories and conversations.

The early years foundation stage is led effectively. This includes care practices. Staff communicate regularly with parents and carers and with other settings. This enables staff to learn about children's interests and starting points before they begin school so that they settle in quickly. Leaders are highly ambitious for children to achieve, both academically and socially. Children soon form friendships and learn and play together happily. They achieve well.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' barriers to learning effectively. This starts before children begin their time in 'The Owlets'. Staff work closely with parents and carers to understand the individual circumstances that each pupil faces. Leaders use this information to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning or wellbeing. The school's harmonious ethos fosters pupils' understanding of, and respect for, each other.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve, both academically and personally. Leaders draw on information from pupils' educational, health and care plans and personal education plans to shape support. They plan intervention programmes carefully so that pupils can catch up or keep up with the curriculum. Effective pastoral support also promotes pupils' social, emotional and mental health, including access to calm spaces when needed.

Leaders keep a careful eye on how well pupils are progressing. The effective use of assessments ensures that support is tailored to suit pupils' needs. In classrooms, including in 'The Nest', teachers use their knowledge to typically adapt their teaching well.

The school uses additional funding effectively to overcome disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning. Strategies such as additional reading support has improved outcomes for pupils. Staff care for pupils who are known or previously known to social care. Work with external agencies ensures pupils receive the support they need.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors are united in their determination to provide the very best for all pupils at Dovelands. They have an accurate and secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders focus on the right areas for improvement, and their work has been successful in many aspects of school life. Leaders understand the challenges facing the community and use this effectively to shape provision and enhance improvements.

Leaders provide relevant training, so that staff can support the wide range of pupils' needs well. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support leaders give to their professional development, and the care given to their workload and wellbeing. They are proud to work at Dovelands.

Governors support and challenge leaders in equal measure. Like staff, they share the same determination that every pupil thrives, both academically and socially.

The school is at the heart of this community with the pupils at the heart of the school. It has a real 'family feel'. Leaders prioritise relationships with parents and carers. This starts when children first arrive at school. Staff get to know families well. They use this to help identify and overcome barriers a pupil may have to being successful. This emphasis on positive relationships continues throughout pupils' time at the school. Leaders ensure that all pupils are valued for who they are, have a real sense of belonging and leave the school as happy, lifelong learners.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a coherent programme of personal development. This includes a well-considered curriculum supported by a range of experiences designed to prepare pupils for life beyond school. Leaders consider the context of the school carefully when planning the curriculum. For example, children in the early years learn about road safety straight away, due to the school being situated on a main road. Pupils learn how to keep safe, both online and in the local community.

The personal development programme helps pupils to understand the importance of kindness and respect and how families may differ. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and talk sensibly about consent. Pupils are confident to express their needs and show respect for the rights of others.

Pupils understand moral issues such as pollution and the importance of keeping the environment clean and tidy. The eco team ensures that the school's grounds are litter free. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and experiences, while respecting others' values. Ethical issues, equality and diversity are explored in age-appropriate ways. This helps pupils to recognise the importance of fairness and tolerance. Pupils' understanding is supported through regular assemblies that reflect on important values and encourage debate and discussion.

When planning activities, leaders make sure that every pupil can take part and that all groups of pupils are represented fairly. Leaders use additional funding carefully so that every pupil can participate. Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are in abundance. From drama and gardening, to gymnastics and music, there is something on offer for everyone.

Leaders' support does not stop at just the pupils. Parents and carers are equally as important as their children. Pupils and their families, including those new to the country, receive caring support from expert staff, enabling pupils to settle and thrive.

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

Pupils feel a true sense of belonging in this large, diverse and vibrant school. They are unanimous in their views that, 'Everyone is welcome here, no matter who you are.' Pupils form positive friendships and build trusting, happy relationships with staff. Pupils model the school's ethos by being 'kind, respectful, brave and aspirational'. They enjoy coming to school and feel cared for, safe and known within this close-knit school community.

Right from the start of the early years, clear routines shape the day. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils have lovely manners and behave well in lessons and during social times. They say that bullying is not an issue and are confident that, when incidents do occur, staff deal with them straight away.

Pupils enjoy learning an engaging and well thought-out curriculum. This is typically taught well. Staff know pupils' needs and make suitable adaptations to help them in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to access the curriculum. This includes pupils who access some of their learning in 'The Nest'. Pupils progress well from their starting points and typically achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps.

The pastoral support is a strength of the school. Pupils facing barriers to their learning or wellbeing receive effective support from skilled staff. From cheery meet and greets at the start of the school day to spending time with their friends in 'The Chill Zone', there is something on offer for every pupil, so that they are ready to learn.

Pupils develop their leadership skills and sense of responsibility in their roles as school councillors. They play an integral role in shaping school life, such as by organising 'Dress to Express Days' and interviewing new teachers. Pupils develop their talents and interests through a range of exciting after-school clubs and enrichment activities.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop pupils' writing skills so that more pupils achieve at greater depth by the end of key stage 2.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard in all subjects so that pupils secure their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue their work to further increase attendance rates for groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Keith Lishman.

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

The inspection took place from 8 September to 9 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 governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and with pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jenny Slinger

Lead inspector:

Kirsty Norbury, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Emma Hollis-Brown, Ofsted Inspector

Dawn White, Ofsted Inspector

Rob Perkins, 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 8 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

534

Well 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: 268

School capacity

525

Well 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)

16.47%

Below 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

2.06%

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

14.98%

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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	78%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	73%	Close to average

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

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	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	54%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	44%	Above

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	71%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	77%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	86%	60%	Above

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)	62%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	58%	Above

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	66%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	59%	Above

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	54%	68%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	66%	5 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	71%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	77%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	78%	7 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)	62%	78%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	77%	8 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	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	79%	7 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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.0%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	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)	10.7%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.0%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright