

John F Kennedy Primary School

Address: Station Road, Columbia, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7AR

Unique reference number (URN): 144223

Inspection report: 13 January 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised increasing pupils' attendance by working closely with families and introducing clear systems to tackle poor attendance. They consider trends and patterns in attendance, and they provide personalised support to families. As a result, there is now an improving picture for attendance. Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. Pupils are keen to be in school and learn alongside their friends.

Leaders have established a calm and respectful atmosphere across the school. The school's behaviour policy is well understood and applied by staff. Any behaviour incidents are dealt with quickly and consistently. The approach to behaviour management is underpinned by the school's 'golden rules' and caring relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are well behaved. They are polite, kind and show enthusiasm for learning. They work together well in lessons, and play harmoniously during playtimes. Pupils are clear about the expectations of their behaviour throughout the school day. The school provides a personalised approach to managing behaviour for some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This sometimes includes time for pupils to reset their emotions in the school's sensory or calming spaces.

Early years

Expected standard 

In recent years, increasing numbers of children have entered the early years with additional needs. Leaders have developed the curriculum, indoor and outdoor learning areas and staff expertise in response.

The school partners with parents and carers to understand children's starting points well. The curriculum begins in the Nursery Year and builds progressively into Reception. Leaders have refined the early years curriculum to provide greater focus on literacy and numeracy so children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders' focus on communication and language is evident in staff interactions, where staff support children to develop their spoken language and confidence as communicators. Phonics is a clear priority. The school's chosen phonics programme is well embedded, and children begin learning the essential knowledge they need to read and write from the start of the Reception Year.

Routines are well established and structured. This supports children to settle quickly and engage positively with learning. From their start in the Nursery Year, children are encouraged to develop independence. The warm relationships between staff and children result in a caring and nurturing early years environment. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is at the forefront of the school's work. In recent years, the school has responded well to increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND). Leaders have implemented systems to identify and understand pupils' needs quickly. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to support this process.

With support from the trust, leaders ensure that staff understand how to remove pupils' barriers to learning. They provide training on inclusive practice to develop staff expertise. This strengthens support for pupils with additional needs across the school. The school closely monitors the impact of this support on pupils' learning.

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). This provides highly personalised and specialist education for the pupils who attend. The school partners with other schools within the trust to share expertise and resources for pupils in the specially resourced provision. Pupils join the wider school for whole-school events, residential trips and, where appropriate, curriculum activities.

Disadvantaged pupils are well provided for. They are supported academically and otherwise, for example through access to the wider curriculum, such as educational visits and residential. Pupil premium funding is used well, and leaders check its impact carefully. Most recently, improving attendance and raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils has been a focus and leaders have seen much improvement in this area.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors act in the best interests of pupils. They take time to understand the school's context and community, its strengths and priorities for improvement. These priorities reflect pupils' needs and have shaped the professional development opportunities staff receive. Leaders have engaged effectively with external agencies to support their work to strengthen aspects of the school. They have taken timely action to address areas for improvement, such as attendance and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have taken practical steps to respond to the changing needs of the school community. These include creating additional provision spaces and redesigning learning environments. Some staffing and leadership changes have slowed aspects of leaders' improvement work. However, overall, these changes have strengthened the team by bringing additional expertise and capacity.

Those responsible for governance understand their statutory responsibilities well. Their systems for oversight and challenge work well to hold leaders to account and drive improvement throughout the school.

Staff development is well supported by the school and trust. Staff value the training they receive to develop their practice and expertise. Staff appreciate the attention leaders pay to their workload and are motivated by the practical support they receive. Staff wellbeing is well considered and supported by leaders and the trust, for example through the redesign of staff spaces in school.

Leaders place a very high importance on pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This is reflected in the school's values, the curriculum and the many wider opportunities available to pupils. For example, pupils benefit from the musical experiences available to them. These range from instrument tuition, to taking part in performances and competitions. Pupils enjoy regular singing practice with their peers.

Pupils are taught to be reflective, ambitious and respectful. They enjoy the time they have to build independence and resilience in forest school sessions. Pupils remember well, and with clarity, their learning from the personal, social and health education curriculum, and regular discussions about world events and current affairs. These help pupils to understand British values and citizenship.

Pupils have a strong understanding of equalities and why it is important to treat others fairly. This is reflected in how they include and show care to other pupils in the school community. Educational visits and external speakers help pupils learn essential knowledge and skills, such as how to stay safe in the community and online.

Leaders demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils benefit from the wider opportunities available. They have adapted the personal development offer so it is fully accessible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. For example, leaders proactively encourage pupils to join extra-curricular clubs, and provide practical support so all pupils may participate in residential trips and educational visits.

Whole-school events and celebrations are highly valued by pupils and parents. They appreciate the opportunities to share memorable experiences as a whole-school community.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Currently, pupils do not progress well enough through the curriculum as a whole. Some pupils do not have the basic reading and writing skills they need to access age-related learning in all subjects confidently. In addition, in some wider curriculum subjects, curriculum sequencing does not ensure that pupils build the knowledge they need for later learning. Leaders recognise this and are working to improve pupils' progress in all subjects.

Over the last three years, by the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieved the expected level in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics and were well prepared for the next stage of their education. Typically, disadvantaged pupils achieve well against national averages by the end of Year 6 and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make suitable progress against their starting points.

Some pupils across the school have gaps in their basic knowledge, particularly in writing and handwriting. Leaders have strengthened curriculum design and staff expertise in addressing pupils' barriers to learning in response to the increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This work is particularly evident in the school's approach to early reading, language and vocabulary. However, more time is needed for the full impact of leaders' actions to be seen.

At times, staff do not use their checks on pupils' understanding effectively to inform future teaching. As a result, gaps in learning do not close quickly enough for some pupils. Leaders are continuing to develop teachers' skills in this area. In some instances, it is done well. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse basic number facts and check prior learning is secure before introducing new content. However, this practice is not consistent across the school.

In a small number of subjects, what pupils learn does not build in an logical order, or provide pupils with the knowledge they need for their next steps. Curriculum and teaching are, however, a key priority for leaders. In most subjects, they have implemented a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have focused carefully on curriculum design and lesson structure to ensure learning meets pupils' needs in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

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

Pupils enjoy being a part of this welcoming and inclusive school. They feel valued and supported to succeed. Staff know pupils well and understand their individual needs. This helps all pupils to feel a strong sense of belonging. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, 'The Treehouse', are included in the life of the school and take part in whole-school activities.

Pupils enjoy learning and describe school as a fun place to be. They talk enthusiastically about the wider opportunities available to them, including forest school and residential visits. These memorable experiences help pupils to develop confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils are polite to staff and show kindness and respect towards one another. Pupils are happy and settled around the school, and it is clear that staff's knowledge of them as individuals contributes positively to their sense of being safe and included. Pupils know there is always an adult they can talk to if they need help. They say that bullying is not a concern and are confident that staff would deal with any unkind behaviour quickly.

While many pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 2, in younger year groups, many pupils have not yet secured the key knowledge and skills needed to access age-related tasks successfully. Leaders are developing how they consistently identify and address these gaps across the school.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the wider community. They are encouraged to be ambitious and discuss their plans for the future, including careers. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, for example through whole-school assemblies and classroom-based discussions about current affairs.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen assessment systems, supporting teachers to consistently check pupils' understanding, and use this information to adapt their teaching so that pupils' knowledge is secure.
 - Leaders should ensure greater consistency across the school in how staff address pupils' gaps in foundational knowledge, so that pupils learn the essential knowledge and skills they need to achieve more highly across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should refine curriculum design in the wider curriculum by identifying essential knowledge and clear endpoints, so that pupils learn in a well ordered and progressive way and are better prepared for their next steps.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Oak Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ailsa Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ralph Wood Thoburn.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, and with representatives from the board of trustees and local governing body during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes specially resourced provision for 25 pupils with autism.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Brian Adams

Lead inspector:

Georgina Chinaka, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie McGrane, Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft, Ofsted Inspector

Sonia Fraser, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

424

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: 272

School capacity

441

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)

25.93%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

7.31%

Well above 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

22.64%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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 (revised)	65%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

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	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	39%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	45%	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	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	39%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	50%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	43%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	48%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	39%	69%	-30 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	67%	-9 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-21 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	53%	80%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	39%	81%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	65%	80%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	78%	-18 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	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	43%	78%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	78%	-19 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	52%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	48%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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 (2 term)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.0%	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 (2 term)	15.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	21.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	22.2%	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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