



Brook Street Primary School

Address: Edward Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2JB

Unique reference number (URN): 112231

Inspection report: 28 April 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 promote positive attendance and act quickly when concerns arise. Staff greet pupils and their families each morning, which helps pupils feel welcome and ready to learn. Leaders check attendance information often and spot pupils who may be at risk of missing too much school. They work closely with families to remove barriers, including by supporting pupils' medical needs. This support has helped to reduce persistent absence for pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance for these groups is improving. Leaders support pupils and their families to understand why regular attendance matters.

Pupils behave well across the school. They are polite, kind and confident when speaking with adults. Behaviour in the classroom and when moving around school is calm. Staff build warm relationships with pupils. They support pupils with additional needs through simple, clear routines and access to specially designed spaces that help pupils to regulate their emotions. Leaders check behaviour patterns often. They use advice from external partners to improve their approach. Bullying is rare. Staff address concerns when they arise. Staff apply the behaviour policy with care. Pupils respond well to rewards and clear expectations. This creates a safe and caring environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum. They check the quality of teaching regularly and use their findings to bring about continued improvements. Recent changes to how writing is taught is helping pupils improve the quality of their written work and handwriting. The curriculum is organised appropriately. Staff understand what pupils should learn and when. Teaching of reading and vocabulary is a clear priority. Phonics is taught in a structured and consistent way. Staff's subject knowledge is generally secure, and most teaching is clear and purposeful. Teachers model learning well and use routines that help pupils understand what to do. They revisit prior learning to support pupils who join part-way through the year. Teachers check what pupils know and remember. They use this information to provide additional support, if required. This generally helps pupils to remember more. Early reading, writing and mathematics skills are improving, particularly for younger pupils. Some older pupils still have gaps in handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. Leaders are aware of these gaps and are taking appropriate steps to address them.

Support staff are deployed effectively and quickly spot when pupils need extra help. Adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those facing other barriers are generally well matched to pupils' needs.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the barriers that many pupils face and act promptly to reduce them. Staff identify pupils' needs early and use clear systems to check what support is required. They work with families and external professionals to guide this approach. Staff use

adaptations, such as scaffolds, prompts and vocabulary banks, well. Additional support sessions help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged to succeed. Pastoral care in the 'discovery den' helps pupils manage their emotions and return to learning successfully. Leaders carefully track the progress of pupils who face barriers, including pupils known to social care and pupils new to the country. Leaders provide effective support for pupils who are new to the school. This helps them to settle quickly. Support sessions are reviewed often. Leaders recognise that some actions require a sharper focus so that work meets pupils' needs more precisely.

Leaders use additional funding well to remove barriers linked to deprivation. This includes support to improve attendance and ensuring all pupils get access to high-quality teaching and learning. Staff training has strengthened how teachers support disadvantaged pupils. Staff use strategies that help all pupils take part in lessons. Typically, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils access the same curriculum as their peers successfully.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need further improvement. They have identified the right steps to strengthen reading. There are early signs of improvement in both writing and mathematics. Leaders check that staff training is having the desired impact. They understand what is working well. Leaders seek guidance from external partners to shape provision for pupils who struggle to remain in class. They act on what they find and make decisions that are in pupils' best interests. Positive leadership of inclusion ensures that pupils are well supported in the 'discovery den' and 'sensory zone'. Leaders work constructively with the local authority. They maintain purposeful relationships with parents and carers and understand the school's context well.

Governors meet their statutory duties and have a secure understanding of the school's priorities. They see first hand how the school is improving. This helps them support and challenge leaders appropriately. Governors access training to help them fulfil their responsibilities. Furthermore, they check that resources, including additional funding, are used effectively.

Leaders value staff and take reasonable steps to manage their workload and wellbeing. Staff welcome leaders' clear guidance and the supportive ethos they have created. A broad programme of professional training helps build expertise across the staff. Training is linked closely to school priorities and is helping to drive improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a clear and well-organised programme of personal development that extends beyond the classroom. Leaders ensure the programme is taught in an age-appropriate way. Staff work closely with parents and carers, so they understand the topics that will be taught. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and in the community. Work with the police reinforces lessons learned about risks linked to drugs, alcohol and gangs. Pupils know what makes a healthy relationship and can explain the physical and emotional changes that happen during puberty. They learn how to look after their mental health. Pupils know how to use simple strategies, such as mindfulness, to manage their feelings. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff

support pupils by pre-teaching vocabulary to give them the language to succeed. In addition, pupils recognise the diversity in their school and enjoy learning about different religions, for example they remember recent work about Islam. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is generally secure.

A wide range of enrichment opportunities help pupils to develop their interests and broaden their experiences. Pupils speak positively about how visits to places such as zoos and museums help them understand the past and the wider world. They appreciate opportunities that help build confidence and forge friendships with their classmates. Clubs are varied and well-attended, including sports, craft and chess. Leaders track participation carefully and fund places for disadvantaged pupils so they can attend. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as play leaders and school councillors. This helps build their compassion for others and a sense of responsibility. School councillors contribute to the community through charity fundraising and environmental work with a local wildlife trust. Pastoral support is effective. Pupils feel safe, trust staff to deal with incidents fairly and know who to speak to if they are worried.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Some pupils do not secure the foundations of knowledge they need, especially in writing and mathematics. Older pupils demonstrate variable success in handwriting, spelling and number fluency. Some find it difficult to remember their prior learning. They sometimes have gaps and misconceptions from previous topics, which hinder their understanding. These weaknesses limit pupils' readiness for the next stage of their education. Published results from national tests at the end of key stage 2 reflect this picture, particularly with writing and mathematics. Improvements in learning early mathematical skills can be seen in how well pupils remember what they have learned over time.

Younger pupils are making more secure progress through the curriculum, particularly in reading and early writing. These pupils recall their learning with confidence. Leaders' work to strengthen writing and mathematics is beginning to have an impact, but this is not yet consistent. Some pupils who are new to school have gaps that staff are working to close.

Early years

Needs attention ●

The early years curriculum is not taught consistently well. There are limited opportunities for children to share their thinking with adults. When this happens, staff do not enable children to consistently build their vocabulary, deepen their understanding or address misconceptions. Staff do not use information they gather about gaps in children's learning well enough to provide meaningful learning opportunities within the curriculum. As a result, some children do not build knowledge securely, including the development of early communication. Occasionally, staff do not use assessment information to ensure that activities match what some children need to learn next. Consequently, some children are not as well prepared for their next stages of learning.

Relationships between staff and children are warm and caring. Children settle well into class each morning and understand routines. They play happily alongside their peers. Reception staff teach phonics appropriately, allowing children to build skills in early reading. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive highly adapted lessons and care that match their needs. Leaders act in children's best interests and are working to improve children's language development. However, improvements seen elsewhere in the school have not yet secured consistent impact in the early years.

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

Pupils arrive to a warm welcome each morning and settle quickly into calm routines. They describe Brook Street as a diverse and welcoming school where everyone is respected. This reflects the school's vision for pupils to grow in confidence, embrace opportunities and reach their full potential. Pupils enjoy coming to school and value the kindness of staff, who know them well and help them overcome barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak positively about the opportunities they have to develop new interests and skills. They like learning alongside classmates who speak different languages. This helps them understand the wider world. Pupils recognise that recent changes to the curriculum are helping them make progress, although some still find aspects of language and writing difficult. They talk confidently about the topics they study and the support staff provide in helping them to succeed.

Pupils feel that they belong. They form positive relationships with staff and with each other. Many pupils take on meaningful responsibilities, such as those of school councillors, play leaders and mini police. These opportunities help them build confidence and feel part of the school. Pupils enjoy earning 'Brook Street pounds' as rewards for their effort and progress. This school currency enables pupils to begin to learn about saving, spending and financial responsibility. Pupils appreciate the support offered to them and their families, including breakfast provision and help with essential items when needed.

Pupils behave calmly in lessons and around school. They rightly consider that bullying is rare and that staff deal with incidents fairly. This helps pupils learn from mistakes and repair relationships. Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they are worried. They attend well and enjoy being part of a school where everyone is encouraged to do their best and look after one another.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff interactions with children in the early years are purposeful, in order to help children develop secure vocabulary and language skills.
- Leaders should ensure that older pupils secure the foundations in writing skills, including handwriting, sentence construction and spelling, so that they write with accuracy and fluency.

- Leaders should ensure that actions taken to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely matched to their needs, enabling them to fully benefit from the curriculum.
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About this inspection

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jonathan Bursnall

Lead inspector:

Andy Beattie, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Sharon Cliff, Ofsted Inspector

Cleone Cunningham, His Majesty's 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

227

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: 272

School capacity

270

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)

21.36%

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

2.20%

Close to 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

7.05%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	40%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	65%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	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	50%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	62%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	28%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	25%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	52%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	62%	Below
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	36%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	58%	Below

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 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	28%	68%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	22%	67%	-45 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-29 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	52%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	80%	-35 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	36%	78%	-42 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	22%	78%	-55 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	38%	77%	-40 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 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	79%	-4 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)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	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)	10.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.7%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.0%	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.

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.

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