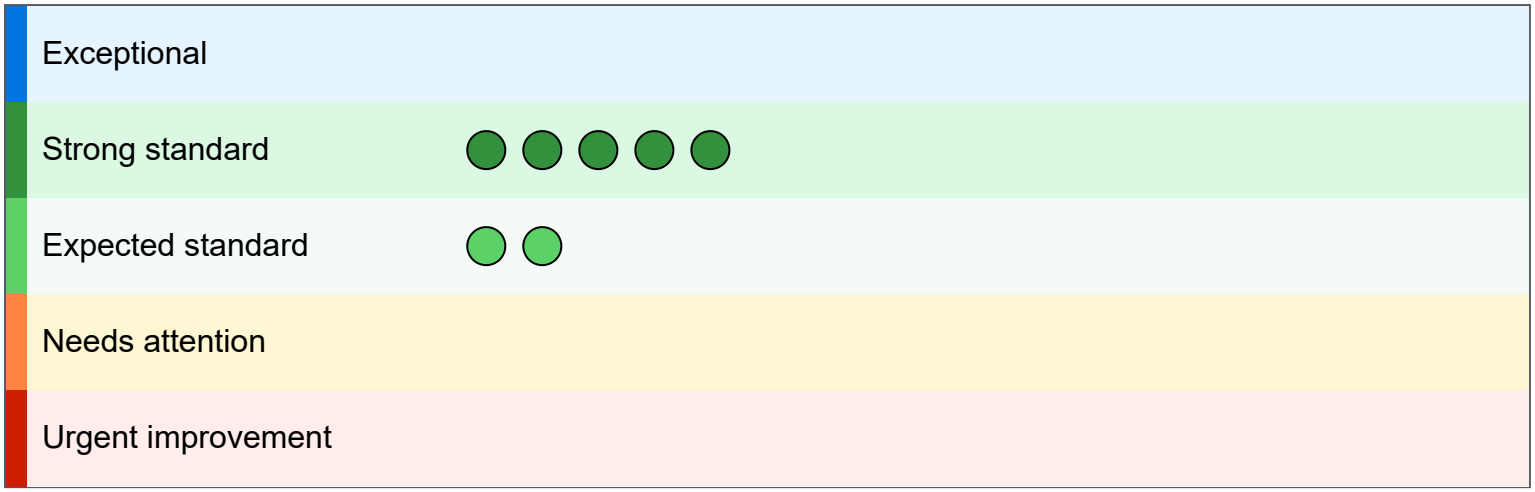
Dove Bank Primary School

Address: Off Rutland Road, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST7 4AP

Unique reference number (URN): 150051

Inspection report: 15 September 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders have created a highly effective culture where regular attendance is valued and promoted by everyone. Staff work closely with families, build positive relationships and respond quickly when concerns arise. Rigorous monitoring helps leaders identify barriers early and provide the right support at the right time. A wide range of pastoral support, alongside effective work with external services, helps pupils who face additional challenges remain engaged in education. This caring and inclusive approach has led to improved attendance for many pupils, particularly those who have previously found attending school difficult. As a result, pupils attend well, benefit from consistent learning opportunities and are able to take a full part in school life.

Pupils are kind, respectful and welcoming. Well-established routines mean classrooms are calm and purposeful. This helps pupils focus on their learning and achieve well. Staff help pupils develop the skills to manage their emotions and make sensible choices. Warm, trusting relationships between adults and pupils ensure that everyone feels safe, valued and included. Any concerns, including bullying or unkind behaviour, are dealt with quickly. Staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need additional help. As a result, these pupils are well supported to manage their emotions, make positive choices and participate fully in school life.

Early years

Strong standard

Children get off to a flying start at Dove Bank, where every child is valued, supported and encouraged to thrive. Staff understand children's needs very well and ensure that learning is carefully planned to meet their needs and interests. Children settle quickly, feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is because adults create a nurturing environment where high expectations are balanced with care and encouragement.

The curriculum is thoughtfully designed around children's starting points. This helps learning build step by step across all areas. Communication, language, early reading, mathematics and personal development are given high priority, helping children develop the essential foundations for future learning. Staff use regular assessment to provide the right support and challenge at the right time.

Adults make the most of every opportunity to develop children's language, extend their thinking and build their confidence. Rich conversations, carefully chosen questions and purposeful activities encourage children to explain their ideas and become increasingly independent learners.

Inclusion lies at the heart of early years. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and those needing additional support receive thoughtful help that enables them to learn successfully alongside their peers. As a result, children achieve very well from their starting points and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Inclusion is at the heart of this school. Staff know pupils and families extremely well. They work closely with parents to ensure every child feels valued and can succeed. Leaders quickly identify needs, listen carefully to families, and put thoughtful support in place to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive personalised support that helps them learn, grow in confidence and become more independent. The school uses additional funding effectively to remove barriers and help disadvantaged pupils thrive. This enables them to take part fully in trips, music lessons, sports and other enriching experiences. Pupils who are known to, or have previously been known to, social care receive carefully planned support, with staff working closely alongside parents, carers and other professionals to help them flourish.

The school provides the right support at the right time for pupils facing social, emotional, communication or additional challenges. As a result, pupils feel safe, happy and included. They enjoy coming to school, participate fully in school life and achieve well. Parents are welcomed as partners in supporting their children.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders, staff, governors and trustees have high expectations for all pupils. Leaders know the school and its community extremely well and ensure that pupils receive the support and opportunities they need to succeed. As a result, pupils achieve well, grow in confidence and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders invest in staff development through high-quality training, coaching and leadership opportunities. This strengthens staff expertise and supports pupils to achieve well.

Leaders also place great importance on staff wellbeing. Staff feel valued, supported and listened to, creating a positive environment where everyone works together to help pupils succeed. This teamwork helps create the caring, welcoming atmosphere that families appreciate and where children feel happy, safe and ready to learn.

Governors and trustees know the school well and provide both support and challenge. Their oversight helps ensure that decisions remain focused on what is best for pupils. Parents speak highly of the school and value the positive relationships they have with staff. Strong partnerships with families and other organisations help remove barriers and create opportunities. Together, these partnerships ensure that every child feels happy, included, confident and able to achieve their full potential.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have created a carefully planned programme that prepares pupils well for life beyond primary school. Rooted in the school’s values of kindness, aspiration and resilience, this work extends beyond the classroom and ensures that pupils develop the knowledge, confidence and character needed to thrive.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that broaden their horizons, develop confidence and encourage them to make a positive contribution to the world around them. Through leadership roles, performances, sporting events, educational visits and enrichment activities, pupils develop independence, responsibility and resilience. They learn the importance of helping others, working as part of a team and contributing positively to their community. As a result, pupils speak confidently about their experiences, show pride in their achievements and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and responsibility.

The personal development curriculum gives pupils a secure understanding of healthy relationships, mental health, online and offline safety, and citizenship. Pupils learn about democracy through elections and voting processes and develop a meaningful understanding of British values through real-life experiences. They speak confidently about equality, respect and inclusion, explaining clearly that everyone is different and everyone is welcome.

Leaders are determined that every pupil benefits from the opportunities available. Regular checks ensure that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing additional challenges participate fully in trips, clubs and leadership roles.

Pastoral support is a particular strength. Pupils feel safe, happy and valued because staff know them well and respond quickly to any concerns. This supports pupils' emotional wellbeing and helps them to participate confidently in school life.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Achievement reflects leaders’ commitment to helping every pupil succeed. Most pupils achieve well from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional challenges benefit from carefully planned support that helps them access learning and make positive progress.

Typically, pupils develop secure knowledge and skills across the curriculum and talk confidently about their learning. Positive outcomes in writing, phonics and reading show that most pupils gain the essential foundations they need for future success. Effective support helps pupils who fall behind catch up and build confidence. Pupils are increasingly able to draw on learning from different subjects. However, pupils do not consistently have opportunities to make these connections and deepen their understanding.

The school's highly inclusive approach is a particular strength. Staff know pupils well, adapt learning carefully and maintain high expectations for all. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and achieve well across the curriculum.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders know the school well and are clear about what is working and where improvements can be made. They regularly check how well pupils are learning and use this information to make positive changes. As a result, pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that helps them build knowledge and skills successfully over time.

Staff provide additional support when needed and generally use assessment effectively to identify and address gaps in learning. Pupils are well supported to develop their reading, communication, mathematical and writing skills. This helps them to access the wider curriculum with increasing confidence. Most pupils build these important skills successfully over time. However, mistakes in letter and number formation are not always picked up and corrected quickly enough. This means that some pupils continue to develop habits that can hold back the accuracy of their written work.

Leaders work hard to ensure that every pupil can take part in and benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities. Staff know their pupils well and provide the support and challenge each child needs to succeed. Clear routines, positive relationships and engaging lessons help pupils settle quickly, stay focused and enjoy learning. High-quality training and support for staff have strengthened teaching, improving consistency across classes.

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

Kindness, aspiration and resilience are at the heart of pupils' experiences at Dove Bank. Pupils are happy, valued and encouraged to do their best. They enjoy coming to school, feel a strong sense of belonging and know that adults will support them when they need help.

From the beginning of their time at the school, children are cared for and encouraged to enjoy learning. Positive relationships with staff help children to develop confidence and the skills they need to succeed. By the time children leave Reception, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy an ambitious curriculum and speak enthusiastically about what they have learned. They take pride in their achievements. Staff provide support and challenge that help pupils to achieve well. Reading is a particular strength. Pupils develop confidence and fluency through effective teaching, well chosen books and regular opportunities to read.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers are fully included in school life. They participate in lessons, clubs, trips and leadership opportunities alongside their peers. Pupils benefit from the school's determination that these opportunities are available to everyone.

Relationships are warm and respectful. Pupils behave well and understand the importance of kindness and respect. They feel safe and trust adults to help them. Pupils say that worries, including concerns about bullying or unkind behaviour, are dealt with quickly. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger children and contributing to the school community.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom, including music, sport, outdoor education and performances. These experiences help pupils to develop their confidence, independence and resilience. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that staff consistently identify and correct errors in letter and number formation so that more pupils develop secure foundational skills and apply these accurately across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils are consistently provided with opportunities to connect and apply their knowledge across subjects, enabling more pupils to work at greater depth.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Learning Partnership Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dan Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Wootton. The executive headteacher is Sally Dakin and the head of school is Joanne Woodward.

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

Following our updated 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 school leaders, including the executive headteacher and head of school. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, trustees, director of primary education, trust school improvement and safeguarding lead and representatives of the local advisory board during the inspection, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Sally Dakin

Lead inspector:
Su Plant, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Richard Kentish, Ofsted Inspector
Antony Edkins, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

225
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

210
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

29.89%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

1.78%
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

23.11%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24		61%	
2022/23		60%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24		74%	
2022/23		73%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24		72%	
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2023/24		73%	
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	14%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	63%	Close to average
2023/24		62%	
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24		58%	
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	29%	61%	Below
2023/24		59%	
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	14%	69%	-55 pp
2023/24		67%	
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24		80%	
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24		78%	
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	29%	81%	-52 pp
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

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)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	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)	12.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.6%	14.6%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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