

Melbourne Infant School

Address: Packhorse Road, Melbourne, Derby, Derbyshire, DE73 8JE

Unique reference number (URN): 112594

Inspection report: 12 May 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 

Overall, pupils develop well the key foundations for future learning. This includes disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' achievement in phonics is in line with national averages. Where pupils fall behind, they largely receive effective support to catch up. Generally, pupils develop fluency in their reading, handwriting and number knowledge. Leaders are improving pupils' spelling skills and pupils apply their phonics knowledge when writing.

Sometimes, staff do not provide pupils with prompt feedback on key errors, such as misspellings of commonly-used words or mistakes in forming letters and numbers. As a result, these inaccuracies can continue over time, hindering pupils from achieving as well as they could.

Pupils' progress across the curriculum is typically secure. This is reflected in their recall of topics and in their work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make steady progress from their individual starting points. Imprecise targets, sometimes hinder the extent of these pupils' academic success.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy attending school and are rarely absent. Leaders help parents and carers understand why being in school every day is important. Through parents' support, attendance rates are high and above national averages. Leaders check the attendance of each pupil daily and spot any concerns early. They act promptly, speaking to parents to find out any barriers to attending well. They provide helpful support where needed.

Leaders have clear and well-considered expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff and pupils understand these fully. Playtimes are happy times, where pupils play well and with respect for each other. Pupils have no worries about bullying or unkind behaviour because it is rare. Staff deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively. Mostly, pupils listen well and try their best in lessons. The oldest pupils are positive role models. On occasion, staff do not support pupils as well as possible to live up to the high standards of behaviour expected. When some pupils have barriers to managing their emotions, staff do not use supportive strategies as consistently as they should. This is partly owing to a lack of clarity in pupils' support plans. However, it is also because leaders are not consistently keeping as sharp an eye on this as they could.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently re-designed the well-considered curriculum to take account of the school's new mixed-age classes. The curriculum sets out clearly how pupils can build their knowledge and skills coherently over time. Overall, knowledgeable staff deliver the curriculum well. They use their assessment of pupils' prior learning and build on pupils' starting points. Teachers typically explain new learning clearly, focusing on important vocabulary. They make sure pupils recall and practise key knowledge through suitable

learning activities. Staff make adaptations to take account of pupils' barriers to learning. Where pupils' targets are imprecise, adaptations are occasionally not as well-tailored.

Leaders prioritise pupils securing key knowledge and skills. Year groups learn separately when appropriate, such as in mathematics and phonics. Generally, staff teach the phonics and the number programmes effectively. At times, activities for pupils to practise their skills are not as effective as they could be. Teachers ensure pupils learn and practise handwriting and spelling every day. Pupils gain considerable confidence with writing sentences and stories, through effective guidance from staff. Occasionally however, teachers do not identify and address inaccuracies in spelling and handwriting promptly. Leaders generally understand the quality of teaching, but their oversight does not focus sharply enough on resolving any inconsistencies swiftly.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for children to make the best possible start at school. They have established a carefully-designed early years curriculum. This allows children to gain the essential knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1.

Leaders are proactive in getting to know children and their families well. Through transition visits and assigning older pupil 'buddies', leaders ensure that children are ready for school and settle quickly. Staff consider children's needs and interests well, adapting support where needed. They establish nurturing relationships with children, giving them the confidence to enjoy school.

Early reading is a priority and staff teach phonics effectively overall. They make sure children hold pencils and form letters and numbers correctly. When children practise writing and use their phonics knowledge, staff sometimes do not spot and address any inaccuracies quickly enough.

Staff provide many interesting activities for children to learn a range of skills. Through high-quality interactions, staff engage children's enthusiasm. They support children to throw and catch balls with scoop bats so they can play games cooperatively with their friends. Staff encourage children to use their imagination in pretend activities like casting spells. They make sure children use precise words, such as the names of produce seen on a visit to the supermarket.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise inclusion in the school. They have developed a thoughtful transition programme for children starting school in the early years. They engage with other professionals, pre-schools, and with parents and carers to find out all about the children joining the school. They use every opportunity to identify children's needs and any barriers they may have to their learning and wellbeing. Leaders have clear systems to assess pupils' needs quickly at any point they join school. As a result, leaders and staff know vulnerable pupils very well.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive focused support to overcome barriers to learning. They have planned carefully how to use additional funding to help pupils develop emotional

confidence and readiness to learn. Leaders train staff to provide nurturing pastoral care, which has a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' attendance and supports their progress across the curriculum.

Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the right support. However, during the planning process, leaders do not always make clear to parents and carers the support they are providing. Sometimes, the targets they set for pupils with SEND and the support needed to achieve them are imprecise. This means some pupils occasionally do not receive the precise support they need which hinders their progress.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve a high standard of education and care. Together with governors, they make challenging decisions when necessary. For example, when responding to a reduction in the number of children starting school. Leaders always act in pupils' best interests. They have rightly prioritised a review of the curriculum to adapt to the new organisation of the school.

Leaders typically focus on the right actions to improve the school. While leaders know the school well overall, their oversight of the implementation of the school's policies and work is not as sharp as it could be. Therefore, they do not iron out inconsistencies quickly which hinders leaders from securing higher standards across the school's work.

The committed governors know their responsibilities and meet their statutory duties well. Through their regular visits to the school, they have a secure understanding of the school and the experience of pupils. Governors provide suitable challenge. They hold leaders to account while ensuring they have the support they need to make improvements.

Staff speak highly of the school's caring culture and the support they receive for their workload and wellbeing. Leaders ensure that staff access suitable professional learning to fulfil their roles and develop their practice. Staff value this training, especially the opportunities to work with colleagues beyond the school. Leaders and staff engage effectively with the neighbouring junior school's staff, supporting a successful transition when pupils move on.

The school engages with parents and carers especially well. Parents value the regular communication and opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a carefully-considered personal development programme. They have taken into consideration the school's context and pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils develop a secure understanding of diverse life in modern Britain. Through the curriculum and during assemblies, pupils learn about a variety of cultures and beliefs of others. Pupils speak with interest about different faiths and of visiting a church and a mosque. They talk about the importance of treating everyone fairly, regardless of their faith, culture or a disability. Pupils develop a sound understanding of right and wrong, particularly through the school's promotion of fundamental British values. Pupils can explain how they use

democracy to vote for class ambassadors and how they show respect for everyone's individual liberty.

The school prioritises pupils' wellbeing. Starting from the early years, pupils learn about keeping healthy and safe. They know the importance of supporting one another and having a positive friendship group. High-quality pastoral support is a distinctive feature of the school's work. Pupils learn about their mental health and how to identify and talk about their feelings. They can say if they feel 'blue' and learn strategies to help them feel 'yellow' and happy again. Through a dedicated weekly session, staff encourage pupils to approach a challenge with resilience. Leaders identify and monitor pupils who struggle socially or emotionally. They provide targeted support in the 'Rainbow Room,' when needed.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of memorable opportunities to broaden their horizons. They develop their sense of ambition through visitors talking about their professions and careers. They speak enthusiastically about the arts festival, visits from musicians, music lessons, and a range of clubs and trips. Pupils particularly enjoy visiting a local farm and the Museum of Making. Leaders monitor pupils' participation, making adaptations such as supporting with costs, to ensure all pupils can take part.

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

Pupils are proud of their welcoming and happy school. Staff get to know pupils very well and treasure them. Parents and carers think highly of the school, valuing the care and education their children receive. Pupils say that staff are kind and they help them to learn the fascinating curriculum. If pupils have any barriers to their learning or wellbeing, they typically receive the right support to thrive like their peers. Pupils attend very well.

Children in the early years make a positive start to their schooling which continues through to the end of key stage 1. Leaders ensure pupils develop readiness for learning, alongside securing the key knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics to achieve well. With their many opportunities to learn about junior school life and make friends there, Year 2 pupils move on to the next stage with confidence.

Pupils behave well. Staff make sure they gain a secure understanding of the school's 'STAR' values and expectations. Pupils work well together to look after their school and each other. They know it's important to try their best and make positive choices. Pupils feel safe because bullying or unkindness happens only occasionally. They have confidence that staff will sort out any worries or problems. Pupils say that if anyone breaks the rules, 'we learn from our mistakes.'

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders, through a well-designed personal development programme, enable pupils to grow into positive citizens. Pupils' learning is enriched with many memorable experiences that develop their character. Visits both locally and further afield help pupils learn about the wider world. Pupils speak enthusiastically about different cultures and understand the importance of respecting everyone's views. Pupils learn about responsibility and are proud to be democratically

elected for leadership roles such as school ambassadors. They help make important decisions and contribute to the life of the school.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their oversight of the school's work so they can identify swiftly, and address robustly, any inconsistencies in the teaching of the curriculum or in the implementation of policies and procedures.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding regularly to provide timely feedback that addresses errors and misconceptions, particularly in relation to pupils handwriting and spelling.
 - Leaders should strengthen their systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes, setting precise targets and clearly defining support, in addition to engaging parents and carers more in the process.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Katrina Woodward and Christopher Lancaster.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and school leaders. They also spoke with leaders about their oversight of the school's work in particular aspects, such as inclusion. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Charlotte Gibbs

Lead inspector:

Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Ann Davey, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

138

Below 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

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)

10.87%

Below 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

1.45%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.59%

Close to 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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

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)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	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)	7.4%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.4%	16.2%	Close to average

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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