

Fairlands Primary School

URN: 143785 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

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.

Achievement

Expected standard

Many children begin school with gaps in early language and knowledge. The school, through effective teaching and targeted support, successfully helps pupils to achieve. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully. Pupils who need additional support receive focused teaching that builds their knowledge, confidence and independence. In reading, pupils who did not reach the expected phonics standard catch up quickly through daily practice and well-structured intervention. Most read accurately by the end of key stage 1 and are ready to tackle demanding texts. In mathematics, pupils develop strong recall and fluency, applying knowledge accurately in reasoning tasks. Across subjects, pupils' written work and discussions show that pupils revisit and build on previous learning. Leaders maintain a clear focus on foundational skills and early intervention. As a result, pupils make steady, sustained progress. However, while pupils achieve in line with national outcomes, the school is focused on all groups of pupils achieving higher than this.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a curriculum that has been refined and improved over time. It is established and taught consistently well across subjects. Leaders and staff understand precisely what pupils must know, how knowledge builds and how to secure lasting understanding. The school regularly reviews the curriculum, weaving in a nuanced understanding of pupils' changing needs, for example through adapting religious education to reflect a wider range of world views. As a result, the curriculum has depth and coherence. Teachers' instructions are clear. They make well-informed, subject-specific adaptations that remove pupils' barriers without lowering expectations. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Reading has been a major focus. Leaders have ensured that staff are trained well to teach pupils to read. The school provides frequent and specialist catch up sessions. These have a positive impact on pupils' reading ability and confidence, particularly for pupils who have previously experienced barriers to communication. Leaders' work with external partners such as local English specialists has been used effectively to support pupils' learning. For example, the focus on pupils' writing has led to improved stamina and presentation in their work.

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Early years

Expected standard

Children in the early years benefit from warm, trusting relationships with adults who know them well. Staff create a calm, structured environment where routines are clear and expectations are consistent. This helps children to settle quickly, developing confidence. They feel, and are, safe. At times, adults model language thoughtfully, narrating play and daily routines. This supports children to hear rich vocabulary. However, this is not consistent when children are learning independently. The early years curriculum is well organised and sequenced from nursery into Year 1. Leaders maintain a strong focus on communication and language, recognising that many children start with limited vocabulary. Close tracking of children's progress and working closely with parents and carers enables leaders to regularly adapt provision and grouping to meet children's needs. Daily teaching of key words, phonics and early number ensures children steadily build their foundational knowledge. Staff check children's understanding carefully and adapt their approach to ensure every child can join in and learn. Teaching is purposeful and engaging, encouraging children to blend sounds, explore ideas and manage their feelings. As a result, children make progress from their varied starting points.

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

Pupils thrive in this calm, welcoming school. Staff understand each pupil's needs, interests and potential. Staff's expertise and teamwork ensure that pupils get the right help at the right time. Pupils value the trusting relationships they have with staff and each other. They feel and are safe here. Playtimes are well organised, resourced and supervised so that pupils can concentrate on making friends and playing games. Bullying is extremely rare, but if it occurs leaders take swift action so that incidents are not repeated. Learning is purposeful and interesting. Teachers explain concepts clearly, check understanding and help pupils to build on what they already know. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, talk confidently about what they are learning and take pride in their work. If, for any reason, a pupil experiences difficulties accessing their education, the school provides additional intelligent and well-resourced support. Pupils know that staff believe in them and will not give up until they succeed. Pupils enjoy clubs, performances and community events that help them discover new talents and interests. The school aims for enrichment opportunities to be as purposeful as possible, while minimising cost and disruption to family life, for example linking a trip to a recent history topic, or providing an opportunity to learn about an interesting career. The school provides support to help all pupils access these opportunities. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm and considerate. Pupils understand the school's rules and routines and follow them naturally. This enables pupils to concentrate and staff to provide support to those who need to catch up. Pupils leave the school proud, confident and ready for the next stage of learning and life.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen opportunities to engage children in high-quality interactions during independent learning times in the early years.
- Leaders should closely analyse and act upon performance outcomes of vulnerable groups of pupils, so that these pupils achieve at a higher level.

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Inclusion

Strong standard

This school is rightly proud of its inclusive practice. Parents and carers say that staff '... never give up on a child. They always find a way.' Over time, leaders have utilised considerable expertise to build a highly inclusive culture. This ensures that every pupil is known, valued and supported. Staff quickly identify and act on pupils' needs. They draw on links with families and specialist professionals. Leaders use additional funding intelligently to extend pupils' access to learning, such as through the family support offer. This work also strengthens the school's connection with its community. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged benefit from tailored interventions, including speech and language therapy. Leaders' oversight and regular review ensure pupils' needs are met swiftly, and that support evolves as pupils grow to be more independent. In lessons, teachers skilfully adapt tasks so that all pupils can succeed without diluting ambition. They use precise questioning and visual scaffolds to help pupils connect new learning. Well-trained support staff anticipate when to step in and when to step back. Across all subjects, pupils engage with learning, produce thoughtful work and show pride in what they achieve.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have built a stable, knowledgeable school team, rooted in shared values and with a deep understanding of the community. Staff describe a culture of trust and respect, where decisions are made carefully. The professional learning they receive supports them to have a positive impact on pupils' school experiences. Leaders have created a genuinely collaborative culture. Curriculum leaders and teachers lead by example and model high expectations. Staff are given time to think, reflect and refine their practice. As a result, there is consistency in classrooms, calm routines and strong alignment between the school's vision and what happens day to day. Leaders know their pupils and families extremely well. They work together to remove all kinds of barriers to pupils' education. This ranges from facilitating catch-up support, providing additional resources and adjusting the physical environment to minimise noise. They ensure that the school supports all pupils to flourish, learn and attend as much as possible. Parents and carers, particularly those of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, comment on feeling reassured when their children join the school. They see the difference in how well their children are understood and supported. The school's work with other settings and local partners is a strength. Leaders are open about their practice and generous in sharing expertise in behaviour and inclusive approaches. Leaders responsible for governance know the school well. They use evidence from a range of sources, including visits, reports and pupil discussions, to understand what is working. They effectively hold leaders to account. Personal development and well-being Strong standard The school has built a coherent, ambitious programme for pupils' personal development. The school's work to help pupils understand themselves and others begins in the early years. Pupils learn about relationships, health and safety, and the wider world in ways that are age-appropriate and inclusive. Pupils talk confidently about respect, kindness and the value of difference. The school's enrichment offer is purposeful and inclusive. Leaders think carefully about cost,

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accessibility and pupils' interests when designing clubs, visits and events. They also ensure that every enrichment session aligns perfectly with the school's wider curriculum. This ensures that experiences genuinely widen pupils' horizons, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged. For example, visits to workplaces and universities help pupils see the pathways open to them and raise aspirations for the future. Leaders track participation closely and remove barriers swiftly, such as providing resources and transport so that every pupil can join in. As a result, the school's enrichment offer embraces all pupils and makes a difference to how they think about the wider world. The well-developed pastoral support is rooted in care and connection. Staff model tolerance and empathy in everyday routines. Pupils develop a strong understanding of equality and fundamental British values, speaking positively about inclusion and fairness. They learn how to stay safe online, build healthy relationships and manage their emotions. Pupils feel valued, enjoy new experiences and show pride in belonging to their school community. Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

The school ensures that pupils learn the rules, routines and social skills they need to be successful. Staff help pupils who are new to the school to settle quickly and behave well. Pupils understand what is expected of them. If a pupil's conduct is not as leaders expect, the school responds quickly to help pupils to reflect, learn and make better choices. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive well-planned support, such as structured sensory breaks and small-group sessions. Pupils who benefit from this support reduce their anxiety and improve their self-control. Around school and in the playground, pupils are polite and engaged. Leaders are relentlessly focused on pupils' attendance. They understand that all pupils need to be in school as often as possible, and they act swiftly before pupils' attendance falls too far. They analyse and identify patterns in pupils' attendance data. They work closely with families to remove barriers that prevent pupils from attending regularly. Attendance has improved steadily. Persistent absence has fallen, particularly for pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/fairlands-primary-school-stevenage>