

Hetton Lyons Primary School

URN: 144225 | Inspected: 13 January 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.

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils generally achieve well, as reflected in the school's published outcomes. The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is close to or above the national average. This includes disadvantaged pupils, who achieve well overall. Leaders recognise that too few pupils reached the higher standard in reading in 2025, and that progress in writing for some pupils could be better. They are addressing these issues effectively. Younger pupils learn to read accurately and fluently. This is reflected in the average proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

The school's sharp focus on securing basic knowledge and recent changes to the English curriculum rapidly closes gaps in pupils' learning. This enables pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in other subjects and ensures that, across the wider curriculum, pupils typically progress well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They evaluate provision, making thoughtful decisions to secure further improvement. Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum, which is coherently sequenced across all subjects to enable pupils to build knowledge over time. For example, pupils use their knowledge of multiplication facts gained in Year 2 when learning more complex mathematical processes in later years. The building blocks for reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. Skilful phonics teaching ensures pupils gain the knowledge they need to read accurately. Where pupils need to catch up, leaders provide timely support. Across the curriculum, teaching develops pupils' spoken and written language effectively. Pupils typically gain the knowledge they need to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Teaching is generally effective. Ongoing training helps teachers to deliver targeted support and use adapted resources to reduce barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use a range of checks to identify pupils' starting points, address misconceptions and correct errors. However, this is not consistent across the school. Sometimes teachers do not make the necessary checks.

Leaders are currently improving assessment practices to ensure that pupils build knowledge consistently well in

Hetton Lyons Primary School

URN: 144225 | Inspected: 13 January 2026

all subjects.

Early years

Expected standard

The early years provision is welcoming. The learning environment is purposeful and staff support children's development effectively. Leaders work well with parents to get to know children's individual needs. They carefully plan learning for each child, making the right adjustments to support their progress. The early years curriculum enables children to build strong foundations for later learning. For example, children have ample opportunities to learn pre-writing skills such as mark making. Staff assess children individually to ensure their knowledge is secure before progressing to letter formation. The wider curriculum is thoughtfully developed, with key vocabulary introduced for each area of learning. This helps children to be ready for Year 1. Leaders have rightly identified weaknesses in pencil grip as children move from early years into key stage 1, and have taken decisive action. The school's new handwriting curriculum is showing impact, alongside a renewed and well-planned focus on developing fine and gross motor skills. Children benefit from a wide range of activities that strengthen their core stability and hand control, such as using modelling dough and tweezers. Daily phonics sessions and story time ensure that children gain the knowledge they need for early reading and develop an enjoyment of books. Staff prioritise children's communication and language. Staff generally engage well with children, having supportive interactions with them.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of the school's work. They promote a culture of high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' needs are identified and assessed promptly and accurately. Leaders work closely with families, professionals and external agencies to ensure that pupils are known well as individuals. This enables leaders to put appropriate support in place quickly so that pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Inclusive practices used across the school include reasonable adjustments and thoughtful adaptations that enable pupils to access the full curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils benefit from an environment where differences are understood and respected. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and evaluate the impact of their provision. This ensures that the support pupils receive remains responsive and that pupils make progress from a range of starting points. Staff receive the right training to build provision in line with pupils' needs. Additional funding is used purposefully to strengthen inclusion and improve outcomes. Leaders have effective processes in place to review the impact of this, for example the pupil premium grant. The specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as alternative provision arrangements, are effective and promote pupils' successful participation in school life.

Hetton Lyons Primary School

URN: 144225 | Inspected: 13 January 2026

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders demonstrate high expectations. They evaluate the school's work accurately, providing detailed reports to governors and trustees that support informed decision-making. Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened their oversight of the curriculum, sharing expertise across the school and with the wider local authority. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths, and they act effectively to address areas for development, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. They engage with external agencies to enhance the curriculum and pupils' experiences. For example, leaders ensure that pupils from the UK Guild of Showmen community access distance learning packs and temporary schools to bridge the education gaps caused by travel. The collaborative and supportive culture in the school helps staff to feel valued and involved in leaders' vision. Professional development is carefully aligned to school priorities, including highly effective support for early career teachers. Governors provide effective support and challenge, asking probing questions, following up actions rigorously and holding leaders to account. Governors understand the school's strategic direction, work cohesively as a team and maintain a visible presence at the school. They fulfil their statutory duties. Leaders and governors alike understand the importance of getting it right for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and face other barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. They are reflective and accurately identify when improvement is needed. Leaders make decisions that are rooted in pupils' best interests. They foster a reflective and ambitious environment where pupils and staff can thrive.

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

Pupils thrive at this school. In the early years, children settle quickly because they are well supported by caring staff. This helps children to work well together as they learn about the world around them. This culture of collaboration and curiosity continues to develop as pupils progress through the school. Overall, pupils achieve well and show enjoyment of learning. They speak positively about their lessons and value the ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum. Teachers help pupils to build knowledge over time and prepare them well for their next steps

. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support to learn alongside their peers. Any barriers to learning are identified early and addressed thoughtfully. Pupils who attend 'The Den', the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, benefit from specialised learning. This enables these pupils to acquire the skills they need to make progress through the curriculum. Most pupils attend school often and participate enthusiastically in the extensive range of activities on offer, for example tennis and brass band tuition. Pupils and parents and carers enjoy attending events throughout the year, such as coffee mornings and May Day celebrations. Leaders plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, such as serving as school counsellors or school ambassadors. These roles help pupils to feel trusted and appreciated, while making an active contribution to the school community. They prepare pupils well for later life. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning and to one another. They understand the expectations of their behaviour, so reminders from staff are rarely needed. A highly effective pastoral care programme supports pupils' confidence, resilience and emotional wellbeing. Bullying is rare, and

Hetton Lyons Primary School

URN: 144225 | Inspected: 13 January 2026

pupils are confident that adults will act swiftly and effectively should any concerns arise. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen teachers' use of assessment to understand pupils' starting points and ongoing progress so that they can adapt teaching where necessary, identify and address gaps and support pupils to achieve as highly as possible.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Pupils' personal development is a significant strength of the school. It is underpinned by a carefully designed, responsive curriculum that is closely matched to pupils' needs and experiences. The comprehensive personal development programme is enhanced through effective partnerships with external agencies, such as the fire service and community health professionals. This ensures learning is relevant to current community issues and supports pupils' understanding of risk. A wide range of opportunities, including guest speakers and educational visits, enrich pupils' experiences. Leaders ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are very well prepared for life beyond school. Pupils gain a sense of belonging. For example, by celebrating 'Hetton heroes' they explore achievements within the local community. Pupil voice strongly informs provision, for example, through discussions about effective budgeting and online safety. Learning is structured to deepen pupils' understanding as they move through the school. Weekly assemblies promote equality and offer pupils the opportunity to reflect on important messages about British values, such as democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. Pupils are articulate, respectful and reflective when discussing diversity, fairness and difference. Scenario-based learning, visits to places of worship and lessons about healthy relationships further strengthen pupils' understanding. The sex and relationships education and health education is taught effectively, in an age-appropriate way. Pastoral care is extremely well planned. A graduated approach to nurture, supported by assessments and external referrals where needed, ensures pupils' emotional and mental health needs are met exceptionally well. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs, leadership roles, such as 'friends against bullying', and enrichment opportunities. Leaders closely track participation in these to ensure that everyone is included. As a result, pupils develop character, responsibility and confidence. Overall, pupils are eminently well prepared for life in modern Britain. Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders demonstrate an effective and proactive approach to promoting positive attendance and behaviour, ensuring pupils are able to access learning effectively. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average and improving. Leaders' meticulous analysis of attendance is driving this improvement. They identify and address any barriers to attendance promptly, for any particular vulnerable groups in the school. They use

Hetton Lyons Primary School

URN: 144225 | Inspected: 13 January 2026

support from external agencies effectively where needed and work closely with families to ensure pupils continue to access learning when they are unable to attend, for example when pupils from the UK Guild of Showmen are travelling. Leaders' monitoring systems are comprehensive, and they review the impact of their actions to inform future decisions. Pupils throughout the school meet the high expectations for behaviour, showing respect for staff and each other. They engage well in lessons. Classrooms are calm and orderly, and disruption is rare. Staff apply the school's behaviour-related policies consistently and fairly. Pupils who struggle to manage strong emotions benefit from targeted sensory support that enables them to regulate their behaviour and participate fully in learning. Staff deal with any behaviour incidents or instances of unkindness quickly and effectively. Pupils move calmly and sensibly around the school. There is a culture of community and acceptance in the school, in which differences are celebrated. Leaders' strategies to improve behaviour are effective, creating a safe, respectful environment and sustaining high standards of conduct overall.

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/hetton-lyons-primary-school-houghton-le-spring>