

Airy Hill Primary School

Address: Waterstead Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 1PZ

Unique reference number (URN): 144679

Inspection report: 15 September 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have high expectations for attendance. They have secured notable improvements in pupils' attendance over time. This is the case for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are persistent in their approach to ensuring that pupils attend well. Leaders have significantly reduced persistent absence over time. Staff work diligently with families and professionals to identify barriers to pupils attending school. Leaders are then rigorous in ensuring that pupils and families receive the right support to remove these barriers. Leaders analyse attendance information in detail, intervene early and develop close partnerships with families.

Behaviour across the school is highly positive. Leaders have created a culture in which pupils treat adults and their peers with kindness, respect and integrity. They demonstrate positive manners. Pupils understand and talk about their responsibility for behaving well so that everyone can learn. Classrooms are calm and purposeful environments where children show consistently positive attitudes to learning. Pupils, including children in the early years, know and follow well-established routines. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are extremely rare and dealt with swiftly. The school's values are firmly embedded and have a positive influence on pupils' conduct and relationships.

Early years

Strong standard ●

The early years environment is warm and welcoming. Children settle well because routines are very well established. Staff make time to speak with parents at the start of the school day, building positive family relationships. The classrooms and the outdoor areas are well resourced and organised. Children access this with independence and confidence. All early years statutory requirements are met and clear routines are in place. This contributes to the safe environment.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the developmental needs of the children. It is ambitious and well thought out. Leaders adapt the curriculum to make sure that learning builds progressively from Nursery through to the end of Reception. Leaders identify the knowledge and skills that children need to be ready for their next stage of learning. Most children secure the knowledge they need to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. Children make positive progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff are determined to ensure that every child develops their communication and language effectively. They make every conversation with children count. Interactions between staff and children are of a high quality and help children to extend their thinking and vocabulary.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders promote a highly inclusive culture where all pupils understand that they have a right to learn. Leaders consider carefully how to remove barriers to learning for pupils and make sure that the school offers a learning environment that supports all pupils to thrive. For

example, leaders ensure that there is consistency in routines and classroom environments throughout the school. This means that pupils know what to expect and are not distracted. This supports pupils to participate fully in learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported to achieve. Leaders assess pupils' needs from their earliest starting points in school. They make sure that pupils receive the support they need to access learning alongside their peers. Leaders review this support regularly to make sure it is effective. Staff know and understand each pupil well. They skilfully adapt the curriculum and provide the adjustments pupils need to succeed.

Leaders use pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils receive highly effective support and enjoy experiences that help them to achieve well. This includes ensuring that they can take part in residential trips and extra-curricular activities. Those responsible for governance thoroughly consider the impact of leaders' actions for disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers to learning.

Leaders work in partnership with a range of external agencies effectively. They draw on expert knowledge when needed to help reduce barriers for pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a highly ambitious vision for the school. They are driven, and provide a high-quality education and positive experience for the pupils in their care. Leaders have a clear understanding of their school and the context in which they are working. They know individual families and pupils well. Leaders identify priorities with a clear rationale. They take precise action to improve these areas at pace. This has resulted in substantial improvements in many aspects of the school's work over time.

There is a culture of high professionalism across all staff in school. Leaders ensure that staff receive high-quality coaching and mentoring alongside research-informed training so that they continually develop and improve their practice. Staff value the professional learning and support they receive.

Those responsible for governance work in partnership with leaders to drive improvements. Governors are skilled in balancing the support and challenge they offer leaders. They collaborate highly effectively through periods of change. Those responsible for governance know and uphold their statutory duties effectively. Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance act consistently in the best interests of pupils.

Staff feel valued and proud to work at the school. They are highly positive regarding workload and wellbeing. They feel that these are well considered by leaders. Leaders develop extremely positive relationships with parents, carers and the community. Parents express positive views about the care and support their children receive, as well as the breadth of wider opportunities that the school offers. Parents feel confident that their children are happy and safe in school.

Leaders ensure that the comprehensive programme for personal development supports pupils to become well-rounded, independent members of the school community. It is an entitlement for all pupils. The programme develops confidence and resilience in pupils and supports them to understand how to conduct themselves respectfully. Pupils have a secure understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and they contribute to the school's ethos through class charters and assemblies.

Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. They have opportunities across the curriculum to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Through the school's personal development programme, pupils feel equipped to challenge discriminatory behaviour. Pupils have a strong knowledge of British values and value difference and diversity. They understand the importance of tolerance and equality and demonstrate this consistently in their behaviour.

Pupils benefit from a range of experiences through the taught curriculum and wider opportunities that broaden their experiences and develop their talents in aspects such as sport, oracy and music. These include residential visits to Scarborough in key stage 1 and London in Year 6. Through these, pupils progressively develop their confidence and character. Pupils contribute to their wider school community through fundraising events and visits to the local care home, where they read to the residents. Leaders ensure that pupils have a detailed understanding of how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both offline and online.

There are a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to attend. These include sporting clubs such as curling and archery and musical tuition. Leaders track attendance in wider experiences. Where pupils face barriers to attending, leaders create an offer which supports them. Leaders ensure that pupils access a range of wellbeing support through counselling, music and support from external agencies. This helps to reduce barriers and to strengthen communication and emotional wellbeing.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils at Airy Hill achieve well. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make effective progress from their starting points, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the result of effective teaching in these subjects. Pupils develop effective oracy skills, which they practise across the wider curriculum.

Pupils throughout the school build secure foundational knowledge. This helps them to access learning across the wider curriculum. Most older pupils can remember what they have learned over time in subjects such as science and design and technology. However, they do not always remember this in depth. They talk confidently about experiences they have had in school but cannot always link them to what they have learned in these lessons.

In national tests, pupils' achievement has improved significantly over time. By the end of key stage 2, it is now above national averages. Pupils achieve consistently well in phonics, which is reflected in the phonics screening check. Children are well prepared for their next steps. This includes children in the early years, who are extremely well prepared for Year 1.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken effective steps to develop a curriculum that helps pupils achieve well. Learning is carefully planned so that pupils build their knowledge and skills step by step as they move through the school. Teachers know what to teach next to build on what pupils already know. This means that learning in most subjects builds securely over time.

The curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics is well developed. It supports pupils to build strong foundational knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to follow the same curriculum as their peers because they receive the adaptations and help they need to do so.

Teachers typically share new learning clearly and demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They have high expectations and pupils listen attentively in lessons. Teachers model learning in small steps, which supports pupils to understand new knowledge. Generally, teachers check what pupils have understood in lessons. This means that they can provide timely support so that pupils can catch up if they have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of how the curriculum is taught. They use coaching to help teachers to improve their practice. This means that, overall, there is a consistent approach to teaching across the school.

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

Pupils thrive at this calm and caring school. They feel safe, well cared for and supported to attend regularly. Pupils arrive at school with a smile. They settle in quickly and are happy. Pupils begin work quickly in class and rise to the high expectations that staff have for them. This includes children in the early years, who arrive to a warm welcome and well-embedded routines.

Pupils behave very well throughout the school day. They understand that lessons are for learning and they approach their work with a positive attitude. Pupils concentrate well, work hard and make the most of the learning opportunities provided. Pupils enjoy their learning and work well together. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. They are eager to learn and well supported to do so.

Pupils talk fondly about experiences they have both in the classroom and on trips and visits. They benefit from the opportunities they receive to engage in practical activities. All pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. Pupils attend residential trips that help them to build character, resilience and independence. All pupils represent their school at sporting events and competitions. They feel proud of their achievement at events like these.

At playtimes, pupils benefit from exciting and well-resourced outdoor areas. They play in these spaces enthusiastically. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging in their school community. They know that their views and opinions will be heard by adults in school. They feel that they make positive contributions to their school, for example they know that suggestions they have for improving playtimes will be considered by staff. Pupils do not feel that bullying is a concern. They know to raise any concerns they have with adults. However, this does not happen often because pupils are consistently respectful towards their peers. Pupils act consistently with integrity and display kindness and positive manners.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the effective curriculum and teaching approaches seen in core subjects are implemented consistently across the wider curriculum, enabling pupils to achieve well in all subjects.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Yorkshire Endeavour Academy 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), Christina Zanelli, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mathew Brown.

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

This inspection took place on 15 and 16 September 2026.

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 senior leaders during the inspection. They met with members of the governing body, the chair of trustees and the CEO and spoke to parents, carers and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sam Butters

Lead inspector:

Amy Blackburn, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Janet Madden, Ofsted Inspector

Rowena Sykes, 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

185

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: 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)

26.22%

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

2.16%

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

10.81%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	85%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	35%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	60%	Above

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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	85%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

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	79%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	71%	Above

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	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	38%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	56%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	42%	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	68%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	89%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	76%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

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%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	89%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	56%	68%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	89%	69%	20 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	42%	66%	-25 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	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	89%	81%	8 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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	76%	78%	-2 pp
2024/25 (final)	89%	78%	11 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	89%	81%	8 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.0%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	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)	16.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.6%	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.

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