

Spire Junior School

Address: Jawbones Hill, Derby Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2EN

Unique reference number (URN): 112661

Inspection report: 14 July 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the personal development curriculum is adapted to meet the school's changing context. When appropriate, external specialists are brought in to educate pupils, for example following occasions of pupils making racist comments. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced and that pupils revisit knowledge that they have learned previously. However, this approach has not supported pupils to embed their knowledge.

Pupils learn how to be safe in the community. They understand their school's context through their work on the mini-police programme. They know how to be safe when working online. Pupils learn how to look after their physical health. They learn about different families and the importance of healthy relationships. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of respect, but their knowledge of the fundamental British values is not as strong. Some pupils cannot recall knowledge about different faiths and cultures.

The school's 'SPIRE' values underpin expectations of pupils' behaviour across school. Pupils are polite and enthusiastic. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils demonstrate resilience in their work.

The broad pastoral offer is tailored to meet pupils' needs. Staff are available to respond to these needs. Some pupils receive planned-for pastoral support at the start of each day to support their transition into school.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities. Leaders provide opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. These include sports clubs, dance and art.

Pupils value their leadership roles. They take them seriously. Pupil librarians know that it is important to support younger pupils to access the library to enjoy new books. This gives them a sense of purpose and belonging.

Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils are included in the trips and residential activities on offer. When necessary, leaders ensure that pupils have the additional support needed so that they can participate.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils do not achieve well in reading, writing or mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Outcomes are significantly below national averages. Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with national averages in mathematics. However, this is not the case across all subjects.

Leaders have acted to improve achievement in mathematics. Pupils benefit from the consistent approach and are beginning to achieve well. However, gaps in pupils' knowledge

and understanding in reading and writing are sometimes not addressed quickly enough. As a result, the gaps in their knowledge persist. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This includes some disadvantaged pupils and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils do not consistently have the knowledge and skills needed across the wider curriculum. While pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have done in lessons, their knowledge is not secure. As a result, not all pupils are ready for the next stage in their learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders prioritise attendance. They have clear systems in place to ensure that they maintain contact with families when pupils are absent from school. Overall, attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders understand the barriers preventing pupils from attending well, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work with external agencies to provide timely and appropriate support.

Leaders have created a culture where staff support, care for and protect pupils. Leaders have improved behaviour systems and the support for pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour. Staff benefit from external training to support a consistent approach to behaviour management across school. However, staff do not consistently apply the well-structured approach. In some classes, calm respectful environments support pupils to learn well. Pupils with high levels of need receive bespoke support to enable them to experience learning with their peers. In most cases, leaders respond quickly to bullying or derogatory language ensuring that such behaviour is not tolerated. Staff do not consistently make their expectations of pupils' behaviour clear. Consequently, pupils do not consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning, and they do not typically take pride in their work.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have ensured that a well-sequenced curriculum is in place. However, the quality of the teaching that pupils receive is not consistently effective.

On occasion, staff design lessons that engage pupils' interest and support their learning, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is not consistently the case. In some lessons, staff do not provide learning that meets pupils' needs well enough. This prevents pupils from learning. Some lose focus and do not participate.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to reading and writing, but this is not being embedded consistently. Some pupils are not being supported to develop fluency and confidence when learning to read.

Some staff check pupils' work carefully. They swiftly identify pupils' misconceptions or mistakes. They act effectively to address any missing knowledge. However, this is not consistent. Some staff do not identify pupils' mistakes. This includes in pupils' written work.

Some teachers do not support pupils to fill gaps that they may have in their knowledge within some subjects.

Leaders do not ensure that all teachers accurately model writing for their pupils. This includes, for some staff, when writing feedback in pupils' books. This limits how well these staff promote accuracy in their pupils' own writing.

Inclusion

Needs attention ●

Leaders are aware of the barriers that some pupils face to their learning and wellbeing. In some cases, the school works effectively to reduce these barriers. This is particularly evident when pupils need support for their wellbeing. The pastoral team ensures that pupils are supported to regulate their emotions and to be ready to learn in class with their peers. However, the work to reduce pupils' barriers to learning is less effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive small group support for their learning. However, leaders do not routinely monitor the impact of this support. This hinders leaders' ability to make sure that such support is effective and well matched to what pupils already know and can do.

Pupils' needs are generally identified and assessed accurately. Leaders work effectively with families and with appropriate external agencies to plan the support for pupils. Staff have received appropriate training to help them to respond to changes in the needs of pupils with SEND.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, those known to social care and those who are disadvantaged access all aspects of school life, including school trips and activities. Leaders have suitable plans for spending the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention ●

Leaders and those responsible for governance know the school, the community and pupils well. They prioritise building positive relationships with pupils and their families. Leaders acknowledge that there have been many priorities for improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement; however, the response has not been swift enough. Leaders recognise the need to improve the achievement of all pupils through high-quality teaching. They are taking action in this regard. However, many of these improvements are recent and are still at an early stage.

A relatively new governing body understands its role and responsibilities. Governors have attended training to support them to improve the school. Governors support and offer some purposeful challenge to leaders. Governors are linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. However, they do not strategically monitor the impact of the actions outlined in the plan. Consequently, leaders' actions do not routinely have a positive impact on all groups of pupils.

Staff access appropriate professional development to help them to deliver an improved quality of provision. Time is protected for professional learning. However, the impact of this

training is not consistently evident, for example, in adaptations to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff report that leaders are mindful of their wellbeing and ensure that their workload is manageable. Leaders work with other local schools to share ideas and improve their provision. Leaders value the support from the local authority.

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

At the start of each day, pupils are welcomed into a friendly and supportive environment, where staff care for them. Pupils feel happy and safe at Spire Junior School. Staff build warm and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils know that staff will listen to them if they have a concern.

Pupils benefit from wider experiences through after-school clubs, including football, construction and cheer leading clubs. They enjoy their leadership roles. For example, as a 'Global Guardian', pupils help the school to become plastic free and ensure that pupils and staff turn off the lights. Such opportunities help pupils to be prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils know and understand the school's 'SPIRE' values which are to be supportive, polite, inclusive, resilient and enthusiastic. Pupils are polite and many will ask adults if they are having a good day. Some pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and want to succeed. However, in some subjects, pupils do not achieve well. As a result, these pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their learning. At times, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive work that does not take enough account of what they know and can do. Consequently, this work does not meet their needs, and they do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils benefit from well-established routines and, in some classes, high expectations of behaviour are evident. As a result, some pupils learn in calm and orderly classrooms. However, sometimes, pupils are not able to learn due to behaviour incidents in their classroom. Many pupils play and socialise well together. They report that incidents of bullying do occasionally happen and they say that teachers usually help them.

Pupils understand the need to respect and be kind to others. Most pupils attend well.

Next steps

- Leaders, including governors, should ensure that they act swiftly to bring about the necessary improvement to the school's provision, in line with their priorities. They should monitor this work, to establish its impact and to develop or refine it further, as and when appropriate.
- Leaders should ensure that all teachers accurately identify any misconceptions or barriers to learning that pupils may have, especially in reading and writing. They should use this

information to assist them to adapt the curriculum and teaching appropriately, to enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, to progress in their learning.

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded and consistent across the school so that pupils progress and achieve well in all subjects of the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning and that positive behaviours are taught and modelled.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Martin Lloyd.

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

Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and governors, including the chair. They also spoke to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff and a wide range of pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.

The school does not use alternative provision.

The school offers a breakfast club.

Head Teacher: Charlotte Vernon

Lead inspector:

Donna Chambers, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Amanda Greaves, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Atkins, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

175

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

204

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)

59.43%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

2.86%

Close to 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

21.14%

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	42%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	31%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	49%	60%	Below

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	56%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	46%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	73%	Below

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	55%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	61%	71%	Below

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	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	32%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	19%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40%	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	51%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	63%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
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	48%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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)	46%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	59%	Above

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	32%	68%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	19%	69%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	67%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 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	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	81%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	80%	-18 pp
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	48%	78%	-30 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	78%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 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)	46%	81%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	80%	79%	1 pp

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)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	16.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.5%	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.

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