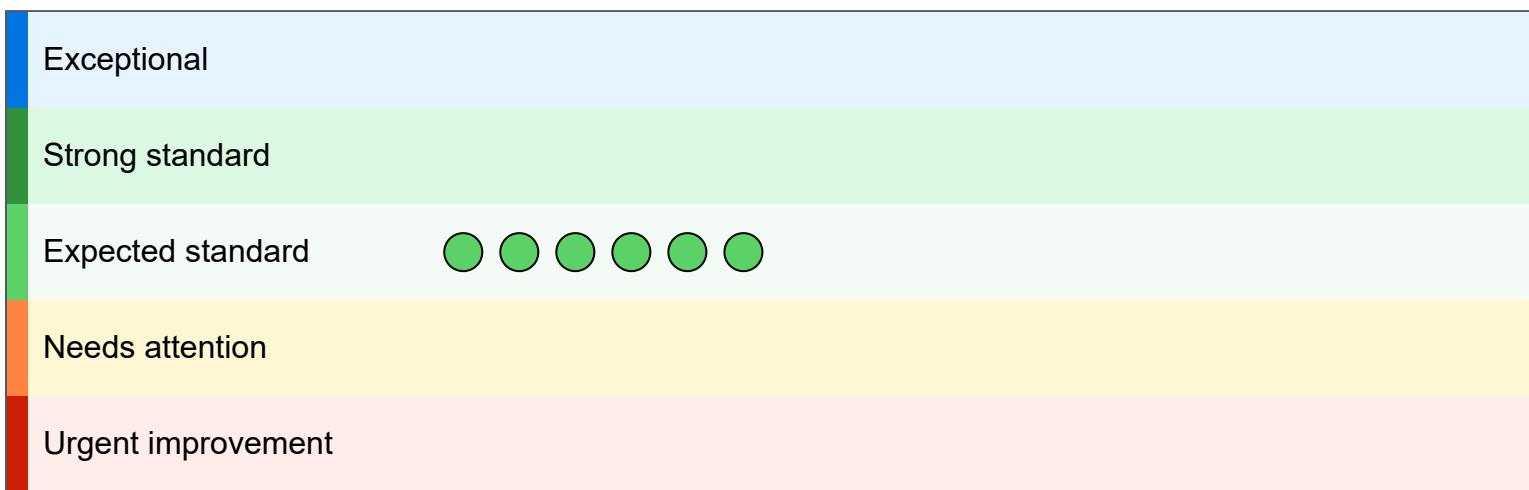


Howden Junior School

Address: Hailgate, DN14 7SL

Unique reference number (URN): 149260

Inspection report: 2 December 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.

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 ●

Pupils achieve well on the whole across the curriculum. They are typically well prepared for their next steps in education. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils typically progress appropriately over time from their starting points. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are broadly in line with national averages. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils at the school and those nationally are narrowing. Their achievement in reading is particularly noteworthy.

Over time, pupils' outcomes in the multiplication tables check in Year 4 have been significantly below national averages. Leaders are aware of this. They have taken effective steps to further develop pupils' knowledge of number facts. This is helping pupils to develop a more secure understanding of times table facts to help with their wider mathematical work and across the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in whole-school attendance that is consistently higher than the national average. Likewise, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is lower than that nationally. Leaders have embedded high expectations of attendance. They work effectively with parents and carers where pupils' absence is likely to become an issue. Leaders' actions to support families and pupils around attendance have a positive impact. This work has reduced the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are persistently absent from school.

Leaders have crafted a peaceful and orderly environment throughout the school. Behaviour is typically positive and respectful. Incidents of disruption are few and far between. As a result, pupils are able to focus on their learning. The pastoral support in school is commendable and has a significant impact on helping pupils in times of need. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are positive. Bullying and any use of discriminatory language is rare. When this is reported, staff deal with this appropriately. They understand and consistently apply the school's behaviour systems. This helps to ensure that pupils have positive experiences at more unstructured parts of the day such as playtime.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

Leaders have prioritised the development of the curriculum. They have an astute understanding of where further refinements need to be made in specific subjects. Leaders provide staff with the support that they need to deliver the curriculum as intended. This includes making sure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need.

Teachers create memorable learning experiences. These help pupils to remember key knowledge. For example, pupils develop the vocabulary needed to enthusiastically discuss Roman culture, from road-building to eating exotic foods such as flamingos. The same is true in mathematics, where pupils discuss and record using accurate vocabulary.

Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge for reading, writing or mathematics. Typically, these are identified and addressed in a timely fashion. However, there are a small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities where these gaps are not addressed as quickly as they could be. Some staff have not had sufficient training in this aspect. Consequently, some pupils do not progress as well as they might.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an inclusive approach across the school. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get the opportunities they need to succeed. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is particularly noteworthy. The SEND team has embedded processes that quickly identify and address pupils' needs. Leaders work effectively with families and professionals to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. This bespoke support helps pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils eligible for the government's pupil premium funding also benefit from effective, targeted support. The impact of this well-monitored support means that pupils who are disadvantaged generally progress and achieve well across the curriculum.

However, the school has not provided sufficient training to all staff to help them identify gaps in some pupils' knowledge, including pupils with SEND. This means that the support for these pupils lacks precision at times. Adaptations to tasks or teaching approaches do not always enable some pupils to make the progress which they are capable of. As a result, for some pupils, gaps in knowledge remain a barrier to continued learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels have a keen and accurate understanding of the school's strengths. Through a clear programme of reflection and evaluation, they identify and prioritise appropriate areas for further development. This work has had a significant impact over time, including enhancements to the school's curriculum and provision in reading for disadvantaged pupils. Mechanisms for oversight between the local governing body and the trust are effective. Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory obligations.

The trust receives the detailed information it needs to evaluate the school's performance. Using this information, trustees and governors support and challenge school leaders in order to keep pupils' best interests at heart. Leaders are open to this challenge and are highly reflective in their work. Significant examples of this work can be seen in the development of the special educational needs and/or disabilities team and the pastoral support team across the school. Inclusion for all is a key element in leaders' work.

Leaders promote the wellbeing of staff. They carefully consider staff's workload when making improvements across the school. The programme for staff's professional development is appropriate. It is linked to the identified school priorities. Some of this professional development has a significant impact. However, there are some elements of this programme that could be strengthened to develop whole-school expertise. For example,

leaders should prioritise staff training on adapting learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an approach to personal development that is appropriate and diverse. It teaches pupils that they need to be safe in their community and beyond. Pupils get every opportunity to develop their moral compass, gaining a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils learn about the different types of people and families that make up modern-day Britain. Pupils respectfully explore similarities and differences in society, including protected characteristics. Enrichment opportunities are deliberately planned to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, regular visits to places of historical and local significance enable pupils to engage with artistic and cultural opportunities.

Residential activities build pupils' resilience and independence, both key traits that are fostered in school. Across the wider trust, pupils get opportunities to attend pupil summits and reflect on global issues such as sustainability. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive the same entitlement to these rich experiences, identifying and removing any barriers to participation. This enables disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to benefit from these opportunities.

Pupil voice is integral. For example, house captains and wellbeing ambassadors are democratically elected. This helps to develop pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Other pupils apply to run their own lunchtime clubs. They rightly demonstrate significant pride in these achievements. Pupils are equipped with the tools they need to be safe, both on and offline. They also benefit from an effective relationships education programme that allows them to understand what a healthy relationship should look like. Pupils understand physical and mental health issues. They also gain an appropriate understanding of how their bodies change as they get older.

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

Pupils at Howden Junior School love coming to this vibrant and welcoming school. They are polite, happy and naturally inquisitive, meaning that they benefit from all the school has to offer. Pupils' pride in their school is instantly recognisable. They enthusiastically share the knowledge they have gained from their learning. Over time, leaders have developed high-quality curriculums across different subjects and year groups. Lessons engage pupils, drawing them in and enhancing their learning. Broadly, pupils benefit from having barriers to learning identified and removed. As a result, pupils achieve well. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are otherwise disadvantaged achieve especially well in reading. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The sense of belonging to the school is palpable. Pupils look out for one another. They are included in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes. These expectations are understood across the school. Pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their emotions are well supported by caring staff. Attendance is usually high. Pupils' wellbeing is supported by staff who respond quickly to individual needs.

The school's value of 'care' is very evident and helps pupils to feel safe. Bullying is rare, and any concerns are quickly addressed. The plan of enrichment opportunities beyond the curriculum ensures that pupils' wider development is a high priority. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities. For example, the wellbeing ambassadors are proud of the difference they make around school. House captains also take pride in their roles. Pupils at Howden Junior School blossom. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the school's processes to identify gaps in knowledge for some pupils are well known and embedded so that effective provision and curriculum adaptations continue to further close those gaps.
- Leaders should ensure that highly effective professional development opportunities are accessed by all staff to build and continually improve staff's expertise in adapting learning tasks to precisely meet pupils' needs.

About this inspection

- This school is part of The Education Alliance, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathan Uttley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Dow.
- 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 spoke with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and other staff during the inspection. They also spoke with members of the local governing body and representatives of the trust, including the deputy chief executive officer. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, visited a wide sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects.
- The school has undergone a significant change since the predecessor school's last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in April 2025. The assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2025.

Headteacher: Claire Isitt

Lead inspector:

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kathryn McDonald, His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Gibbins, His Majesty's 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 2 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

224

Close to 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

239

Close to 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)

17.86%

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

3.13%

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

13.39%

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

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).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	60%	61%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	79%	74%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25	62%	72%	Below
2023/24	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25	74%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25	38%	47%	Close to average
2023/24	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25	77%	63%	Above
2023/24	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25	38%	59%	Below
2023/24	33%	58%	Below
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25	62%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	33%	59%	Below
2022/23		59%	

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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	38%	69%	-31 pp
2023/24	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25	77%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24	33%	78%	-44 pp
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24	33%	79%	-46 pp
2022/23		79%	

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 (1 term)	3.5%	5.1%	Below
2023/24	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.8%	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 (1 term)	8.8%	14.3%	Below
2023/24	11.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	11.4%	16.2%	Below

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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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