

# Riverdale Primary School

**Address:** Hambleton Avenue, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 4HH

**Unique reference number (URN):** 145046

## Inspection report: 28 January 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

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders place a high priority on regular school attendance. They quickly contact families, when pupils are absent. Leaders work closely with parents to address concerns early and, where appropriate, visit families to offer support. This helps pupils return to lessons quickly and attend more regularly. Pupils and families appreciate the school's offer. The curriculum offers wider opportunities, which act as a magnet, drawing pupils to its centre. Pupils want to attend and do not want to miss out on learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Attendance is close to national averages.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Classrooms remain calm, organised and purposeful. The school has clear routines that pupils know and follow with pride. In lessons, pupils cooperate and care for equipment. At breaktimes, pupils play safely and use equipment responsibly. Staff manage pupils' behaviour fairly and consistently. They build strong, respectful relationships with pupils and clearly explain expectations. Pupils understand what teachers expect of them. Pupils show self-discipline, respect others and make meaningful contributions to a positive school environment.

When pupils' behaviour falls short of the high expectations, for example if bullying occurs, pupils and staff call it out and act appropriately and quickly. Staff make specific adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities without diluting expectations.

### Early years

Expected standard 

Children feel safe, calm and ready to learn. Staff set up classrooms well. This helps children build their knowledge in all areas of learning. Adults know children well and build caring relationships. They have high-quality interactions with children during play, story time and snack time. Adults listen with attention and ask straightforward questions. This helps children think and improve their language skills. This helps children grow in confidence and learn new words.

Leaders have created a clear curriculum that helps learning build on the Nursery Year. By the end of the Reception Year, children are well prepared for key stage 1. Children make use of 'check-ins' each morning, so staff know how they are feeling and if they are ready to learn. Ongoing observations throughout the day allow staff to understand what children can do. For example, they watch how children hold pencils or share toys. Staff use this information to change future learning activities. This helps to close gaps in children's knowledge without delay. Children stay focused, enjoy learning and explain their ideas.

Staff give early reading high priority. In the Reception Year, they teach phonics using songs, cards and games. Children practise blending sounds and reading books matched to their phonics knowledge. They enjoy reading and develop their skills in readiness of writing.

Daily routines, such as tidying up and lining up, help children become independent. Staff support children during their move into Year 1. Staff collaborate with parents and carers through meetings, workshops and daily conversations.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders quickly identify pupils' additional needs and respond thoughtfully. From the early years, staff spot potential barriers to learning and work closely with families to provide support. Staff make good use of advice from external professionals. Teachers create learning environments that reduce barriers and boost pupils' confidence. Pupils thrive with clear routines and a range of suitable resources. When needed, short-term individual support helps pupils reconnect with classroom learning. Staff encourage pupils to share their views and join discussions. Pupils feel valued and included.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully planned and reviewed. Many support plans give clear guidance and measurable targets. Some need more work to be effective. Leaders assess pupils' progress and attendance in detail. Leaders step in early if there are worries. This supports positive attendance for most pupils.

Leaders use extra funding well. This assists pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. It boosts their wellbeing, engagement and access to learning. Helpful resources clear away barriers. They let pupils join in all school activities. Leaders are improving quality checks. They want better oversight to help pupils succeed. Staff training is regular and addresses pupils' ongoing needs. This aligns with the school's aim to support all pupils in reaching their full potential.

Leaders speak with parents daily. They send updates like the 'Riverdale Roundup' to share important information. Parents can join drop-in support sessions too. These sessions link families to more support groups.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders accurately identify specific areas to improve. They have managed the school through a period of change. This has involved changes to staffing, teaching practice and governance. Throughout this time, pupils have continued to receive the support, care and education that aligns with the school values. Leaders are highly visible around the school. This helps them see what pupils do well and where they need more help. Leaders regularly review the school's progress towards its priorities with trustees to inform their next steps and staff training.

Local governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They regularly check safeguarding, finances and staffing. Local governors visit the school and speak with pupils about their learning and staying safe. Governors provide useful support and challenge that result in marked improvements.

Leaders prioritise vulnerable pupils. They keep detailed records of pupils needing extra support. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils known to social care. Leaders review this support each term and adapt provision with urgency when needed.

Leaders provide staff with regular professional learning. Teachers at the beginning of their careers receive weekly support and design lessons together. Leaders use research to

improve teaching and consider staff workload. Staff feel valued and supported. Leaders successfully promote wellbeing by sharing clear information and offering counselling.

## Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders place pupils' wellbeing and personal growth at the centre of school life. Pupils develop their understanding effectively and articulate their learning in personal, social and health education. They explain how to stay safe online and how to care for their mental health. In addition, the curriculum provides time and space for staying safe in the community. The pupils understand road safety and the risks associated with the local community, such as keeping safe around water. Pupils understand puberty and consent. They show respect for people's differences, including those from different types of family. Staff reinforce this through maintaining a constant focus on enabling pupils to make good choices in and out of school.

Across the curriculum, staff help children and pupils learn to share, manage feelings and solve small problems. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and resilience.

Staff know pupils well and offer tailored pastoral support. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted help. This support helps them feel safe and be ready to learn.

Pupils are developing their knowledge of fundamental British values and cultural diversity. Pupils benefit from a variety of enrichment activities, such as school trips, sports clubs, the spring singing club and the Eco crafts club. Leaders are continuing to develop this offer to further enhance pupils' experiences.

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## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' progress in key stage 2 is not secure. Some pupils do not retain important knowledge over time. Poor handwriting skills, limited vocabulary and gaps in basic knowledge slow pupils' learning. Misconceptions often remain uncorrected. Recent results show that combined scores for reading, writing and mathematics are below national averages, with very few pupils reaching higher standards. Some pupils are not sufficiently prepared for their next stages of learning. This is due to their lack of secure subject knowledge across the curriculum. The changes that leaders have made are improving pupils' knowledge across subjects, including in mathematics and English. However, this work does not show sustained improvement on pupils' progress and outcomes by the end of Year 6.

Children in the early years make a positive start. Many children develop early language, phonics and writing skills well. In key stage 1, pupils build secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use assessment with precision to identify gaps and provide timely support when needed. As a result, many pupils keep up with their learning at this stage.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school, particularly in key stage 2. In some classes, pupils develop their knowledge in a logical sequence and build on previous studies. In other classes, teachers often do not give pupils enough chances to discuss and practise. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not always precise. Misconceptions are not identified or corrected in a timely manner.

Leaders have developed a broad, ambitious curriculum that sets out what pupils should learn over time. In key stage 1, this helps pupils secure their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately and model learning clearly. Staff provide effective support for pupils, who need this to catch up quickly in their learning. Teachers explain ideas well and give pupils regular opportunities to practise new vocabulary. However, the firm focus on handwriting, spelling and accuracy is not always maintained as pupils move through the school. Some activity choices do not enable pupils to build their knowledge well over time.

Teachers generally demonstrate secure subject knowledge in many lessons. Staff understand the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get appropriate support. This enables positive progress in their learning across different subjects.

Leaders ensure that pupils identified as disadvantaged are not disadvantaged at Riverdale Primary School. The school removes barriers to learning. For example, the school provides specific equipment to support learning.

Leaders provide extra training for staff when needed. They are also reviewing the curriculum to ensure their high expectations are achievable. These developments are at an early stage, and it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

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

Caring staff at this school support pupils to succeed. Staff know pupils very well and remove barriers to learning with skill and compassion. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils develop effective reading, writing and mathematics skills. They enjoy phonics and reading sessions. They learn through hands-on activities. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and give pupils time to practise their learning until they gain confidence. Children in the early years make a successful start to their education. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are well prepared for key stage 2.

Further up the school, learning is less secure. Staff do not consistently identify or correct pupils' mistakes in a timely manner. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This slows some pupils' progress and hinders their readiness for their next steps in learning. For example, they struggle to remember key words and ideas over time.

Staff in the 'HIVE' provision provide valuable support for pupils who need help managing their emotions. This helps pupils to focus on their learning. Pupils' relationships with staff are positive, and they trust adults to listen and to support them. Pupils with special educational

needs and/or disabilities learn with their classmates. They use adapted tasks and visual aids to help them.

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for. They know that it is a place where everyone is understanding and kind. Pupils know who to speak with if they have worries. Behaviour is calm and pupils work well together in lessons. Breaktimes are friendly and social occasions. The staff are quick to support pupils and address bullying quickly and effectively.

Responsibilities, such as class and corridor monitors, help pupils contribute to school life. Many pupils enjoy choir and performing at local events. Pupils also help to organise fairs and charity activities, which builds their confidence and pride.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should continue their work to strengthen the consistency in curriculum delivery, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, to help pupils remember and know more consistently over time.
  - Leaders should ensure that teachers' checks on learning consistently identify and address pupils' errors/misconceptions, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge close quickly.
  - Leaders at all levels should continue to check and ensure that their improvement strategies are having the desired impact.
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## **About this inspection**

This school is part of Ironstone 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), Mr Carl David Faulkner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mr Stephen David Elliott.

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, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with the CEO, representatives of the trust and members of the local governing board.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about this school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Interim Headteacher: Mrs Ruth Whyte

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**Lead inspector:**

Richard Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Chris Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Kermotschuk, 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 28 January 2026

**School and pupil context****Total pupils**

**202**

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**

**236**

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)**

**34.86%**

Above 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**

**0.99%**

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: 3.5%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**20.30%**

Above average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

### **Location deprivation**

**Close to 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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	43%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	60%	Close to average

### 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	68%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	72%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	61%	72%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	81%	72%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	57%	71%	Below

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	73%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	61%	74%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	77%	73%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	60%	73%	Below

### **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	48%	46%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	38%	47%	Close to average

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	62%	46%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	44%	44%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	62%	62%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	46%	63%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	77%	62%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	63%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	55%	59%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	46%	59%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	77%	58%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	44%	58%	Below

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	57%	60%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	54%	61%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	69%	59%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	50%	59%	Close to average

## **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	48%	68%	-20 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	38%	69%	-31 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	62%	67%	-6 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	44%	66%	-23 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	62%	80%	-18 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	46%	81%	-35 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	77%	80%	-3 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	63%	78%	-16 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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	55%	78%	-23 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	46%	78%	-32 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	77%	78%	-1 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	44%	77%	-34 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	57%	80%	-23 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	54%	81%	-27 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	69%	79%	-10 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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 (2 term)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	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 (2 term)	7.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	12.4%	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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