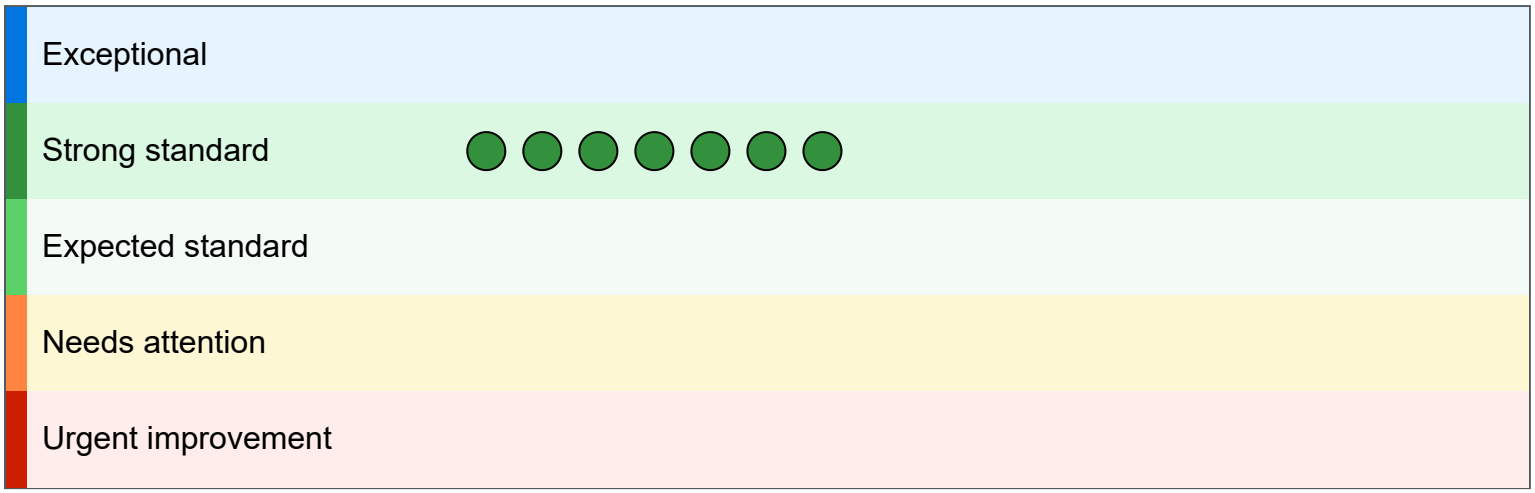
Arksey Primary School

Address: Ings Way, Arksey, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN5 0TE

Unique reference number (URN): 106676

Inspection report: 19 May 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

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

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve very well. By the end of Year 6, they typically attain at or above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make significant progress through the curriculum from their starting points. They are extremely well prepared for their next steps in learning.

Pupils acquire the basics of reading, writing and mathematics from the start of their education. They demonstrate secure phonics knowledge and decoding skills, applying taught strategies effectively. In lessons, pupils are engaged and successful. Work in pupils' books, across a range of subjects, reflects the careful sequencing of the curriculum. Identification of barriers to achievement is swift. For example, pupils who struggle with handwriting show noticeable improvement from the start of the year as a result of targeted intervention.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders and staff have developed a culture in which the importance of attendance is consistently promoted. This messaging is embedded through assemblies, pupil leadership roles and daily practice. Leaders identify and tackle barriers to pupils' attendance very effectively through tailored and responsive support. They work closely with families and pupils to overcome these barriers. The school also works closely with external agencies in its efforts to secure high attendance for all pupils. This includes escalation to the local authority and multi-agency work in more complex cases. Pupils' attendance compares very favourably with national averages.

Leaders and staff have established a positive culture built on secure and respectful relationships. Pupils are supported to manage their behaviour and understand the reasons behind how they behave. The agreed behaviour expectations are applied consistently and effectively. Pupils are active contributors to the behaviour culture, demonstrating responsibility and respect. They confidently address unkind behaviour and work together to resolve issues. Pupils behave well throughout the school and at all times. High expectations for behaviour are understood by pupils and reinforced by adults through clear routines and praise. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to display good behaviour. Transition points in lessons and movement around the school are calm and orderly. Support for pupils who need additional help is tailored and responsive, including external agency involvement. Leaders respond to any incidents, including bullying, quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum. It is well sequenced, enabling pupils, including those with barriers to their learning, to revisit and deepen their knowledge and skills over time. The curriculum design is particularly well suited to the school's mixed-age classes.

Reading is prioritised. Pupils arrive each morning to engaging reading activities. Expert teachers teach phonics with precision, modelling sounds accurately. They quickly address any errors. Once pupils have mastered the basics of early reading, they swiftly move on to developing comprehension and inference skills. Pupils' love of reading is infectious.

Leaders have established a keen focus on pupils learning and using ambitious vocabulary. Staff clearly model vocabulary and concepts. For example, pupils routinely use and understand words such as 'parched' and 'devour'. Teachers use strategies to support pupils in expressing themselves in full sentences. Wherever possible, teachers provide learning rooted in purposeful and meaningful contexts. Clear and consistent teaching strategies support pupils to quickly learn the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers check for misconceptions and use repetition and re-teaching precisely where gaps in pupils' knowledge are noted.

Leaders have developed an embedded culture of evidence-informed practice. They engage with external expertise and research to shape the curriculum and teaching. The school's highly effective assessment systems enable leaders and teachers to make informed adaptations where necessary.

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders prioritise the early years. They have a clear vision for high-quality early education and ensure that this is achieved. Children in the Reception Year learn alongside Year 1 pupils in a shared space. Leaders have ensured that the early years curriculum is thoughtfully structured to match children's age and stage of development. Early identification of children's needs is effective. Close partnerships with families and, where necessary, external support informs this. Staff provide appropriate support, including for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders recognise the importance of communication and language in supporting children's readiness for learning. Staff engage children in purposeful and language-rich interactions. Teaching focuses on repetition, modelling and securing key knowledge and skills, with a clear focus on language and early phonics. Staff skilfully use a range of teaching strategies. They ensure that children access well-considered activities across the provision. Positive behaviour for learning is embedded for all children. Children sustain focus consistently during teaching sessions. They play independently and cooperatively. In the sand tray, children make the shapes of letters and say the sounds that letters make. They count backwards and forwards to 5. Letter-formation and handwriting is focused on mastering skills such as pencil grip and letter formation. Children achieve extremely well and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders and staff have created a culture where all are included and valued. Pupils actively support one another and understand the importance of respecting those who are different from themselves. Early identification of pupils' needs is robust. Leaders use baseline assessment, home visits and secure partnerships with families to identify pupils' needs quickly. Leaders demonstrate effective multi-agency working with partners such as speech

and language services, autism teams and educational psychologists. Leaders use this expertise to inform adjustments to the provision for pupils.

Leaders carefully check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. They monitor this diligently and provide targeted support where needed. Classrooms are well equipped to support teaching that reduces barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing. Modified seating, scribing support, visual timetables and individual workstations are used, where needed. Morning activities ready pupils for learning. This includes developing some pupils' physical and coordination skills. Movement breaks provide opportunities for pupils to be calm and reconnect so that they are best prepared for learning.

The pupil premium strategy is highly effective. Leaders track the impact of funding systematically. Funding is targeted effectively to improve academic progress, attendance and engagement. Interventions are reviewed regularly, with timely adaptations to secure stronger outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and experience equality of opportunity through full access to enrichment, leadership and cultural activities.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the school's performance. They are relentless in their analysis of this and its impact on pupils. Leaders are highly reflective and make all decisions in the best interests of pupils. They have established an embedded culture of evidence-informed practice and engagement with external expertise and research to shape the curriculum and pedagogy. The school is highly collaborative. Leaders work closely with other local schools in the design and delivery of staff training and development. Leaders recognise the importance of developing staff expertise as a key driver of improvement. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their experience of working at the school. They feel highly valued by leaders. Many describe it as being like part of a family. Leaders take deliberate action to protect staff wellbeing and manage workload sustainably.

Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively. Through careful use of evidence, they both support and challenge leaders to secure further improvement. This includes close scrutiny of outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Careful monitoring of how pupil premium funding is used and strategic decisions about resources ensure that the school maintains and builds on successes for these pupils. The majority of parents and carers are positive about the work of the school. They value the weekly learning letters that they receive which outline what pupils will be learning and in which subjects.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education is well considered and appropriate. Leaders are determined that pupils will develop the knowledge, attributes and skills to be well rounded individuals and successful in life. All pupils learn important life skills, including how to make bread, soup, stew and curry. Pupils can discuss money management, mental health, careers and rail safety in a mature way. They know the importance of healthy lifestyles and of healthy relationships. Pupils are reflective, tolerant, respectful and socially responsible. They can describe how they resolve conflicts, support

others and respect differences. High-quality support for pupils' wellbeing further supports this.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. They have a clear and detailed understanding of the learning from the school's relationships and sex education programme which they access in an age-appropriate way. Pupils confidently discuss learning about relationships, body image, mental health and personal safety, articulating why this knowledge is important. Pupils also have a clear understanding of equality and respect, including gender stereotypes and difference in all forms. They speak thoughtfully about supporting peers from different backgrounds, including those who are new to the country.

Pupils engage in democratic processes, such as voting to make decisions. They take on meaningful responsibilities through a wide range of class and school roles. This helps them to understand concepts such as fairness, rule of law and community responsibility. Pupils also benefit from a broad and enriching programme of experiences, including a range of educational visits. These experiences contribute to memorable learning and wider cultural development. Pupils particularly value opportunities in art and physical education. They are inspired by ‘Arksey Alumni’ who are ex-pupils of the school who talk to current pupils about secondary school and careers.

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

Pupils feel a deep sense of belonging at this extremely welcoming school. They enjoy coming to school, arriving with highly positive attitudes and ready to learn. Pupils know that adults in school will listen to them. They feel that they can talk to staff about anything. This helps pupils to feel safe and supported. The carefully designed curriculum builds pupils’ learning and broadens their experience. Pupils, including those with barriers to their learning, benefit from leaders’ determination that teaching is of a consistently high quality. Pupils attend regularly and achieve very well.

Pupils learn to respect one another, understanding the importance of treating others fairly and demonstrating this in their day-to-day interactions. For example, they support new pupils to settle through their warm and welcoming attitudes. Pupils thrive in a calm, supportive environment where adults respond quickly when help is needed. Clear routines and consistent expectations enable them to behave very well. Pupils play purposefully and collaboratively at playtimes. These social times are well structured and engaging. Pupils are reflective and behave with integrity. Leaders have created a culture in which pupils have the confidence to call out unacceptable behaviour or attitudes. High-quality support for pupils' social and emotional development also supports this. Pupils take responsibility for maintaining a positive culture. They confidently address unkind behaviour themselves and work together to resolve issues. Any issues, such as bullying, are dealt with swiftly.

Opportunities such as class jobs, voting systems and shared decision making help pupils feel valued and listened to. As a result, relationships between pupils and staff are positive and respectful. Pupils are proud to be part of the school community. Pupils articulate the roles that they have in school confidently. They are proud of their contributions to school life. For example, pupils take on roles in the 'FUN*Raising' team, which helps to raise money for

playground equipment. The 'tech team' helpfully supports with any technology troubleshooting needs.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to further refine the highly effective assessment systems that are in place to further build on the positive impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievement.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Wendy Gray.

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 co-headteachers, as well as other leaders at the school. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the governing body and met with a range of staff.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does currently not use alternative provision.

Co-headteachers: Shelley Fisher and Carly Davis

Lead inspector:
Dughall McCormick, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Michael Watson, Ofsted 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

72
Well 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

140
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)

13.89%
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

1.39%
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

12.50%
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

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	86%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	S	62%	S
2023/24 (final)	83%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	93%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	75%	S
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	73%	Above

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	86%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	72%	S
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	89%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	74%	S
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	73%	Above

‘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

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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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		63%	
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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		59%	
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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		78%	
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	3.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.2%	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 (3 term)	1.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	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 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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