

Balksbury Infant School

Address: Floral Way, Salisbury Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3QP

Unique reference number (URN): 116063

Inspection report: 7 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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the move to junior school when their time comes. Deliberate nurturing of their perseverance, respect and collaboration fosters their extremely positive attitudes to learning. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils are secure in their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills. Outcomes in the check on their phonics knowledge at the end of Year 1 are high. All groups of pupils, including those with the potential to reach higher levels, achieve well. Pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities make positive progress against their individual targets.

Pupils achieve equally well across the wider curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils' learning across different subjects builds systematically over time. The explicit focus on extending pupils' vocabulary adds depth to their learning. Pupils are confident and curious. They are keen to share all the interesting information they can remember.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance overall and for key groups is higher than seen nationally. Leaders are unrelenting in their efforts to make sure that pupils are in school every day unless there is a good reason. Office staff scrupulously cross-check registers and messages from parents and carers every morning. Any unexplained absences are followed up immediately. Leaders are persistent in offering support and challenge in equal measure to families who find it difficult to establish regular attendance habits. Few pupils are frequently absent.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are impressive for their age. The school values and code of conduct underpin the high expectations everyone in the school community has of each other. Adults are great role models. They ensure pupils benefit from a consistent approach to behaviour management. Pupils behave very well at work and play with little need for reminders. Leaders ensure that occasional lapses are dealt with sensitively. Staff take time to help pupils to 'stop and think' how their actions affect others and reflect on how they might act differently in future. It is very unusual for pupils to be deliberately unkind in their actions or words. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils who need extra help to manage their feelings and relationships with others are supported effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have successfully drawn on extensive reading and research to design, develop and refine an ambitious curriculum. Each subject is important in its own right. Pupils' knowledge and skills are built meticulously from the start of Reception Year through to the end of Year 2 and onwards in the federation. Leaders' unrelenting focus on making sure that pupils secure basic skills is impressive. They have explicitly woven the development of spoken language and rich vocabulary through the curriculum. High priority is given to embedding the early knowledge and skills pupils need to become fluent readers and writers, and competent mathematicians.

Teaching is highly effective across the school. Staff introduce new learning clearly and model their own thinking explicitly. Classroom displays are helpful reminders of key learning points. Activities are carefully chosen to revisit previous learning, helping pupils to apply what they know and remember more over time. Pupils are routinely encouraged to have a go at explaining their ideas and build on their classmates' answers. Teachers carefully check pupils' understanding and quickly deal with misconceptions. They skilfully adapt activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who need additional support. Pupils with the potential to achieve highly are challenged to extend and deepen their learning.

Early years

Strong standard 

Children flourish in the early years. Great care is taken to get to know them and their families and for children to be familiar with school before they join. Warm relationships and consistent routines help children to quickly settle in the Reception Year classes. They feel safe, emotionally secure and happy. Any additional needs that have already been identified are skilfully met from the start. Staff's thorough understanding of the stages of child development and learning means that they quickly pick up any others who may benefit from some extra support.

Leaders' emphasis on ensuring a high-quality curriculum and skilled teaching starts with the youngest children. Learning is carefully mapped from the beginning to the end of the Reception Year. Staff take account of children's interests, consider what they already know and can do and adapt provision accordingly while never losing sight of ambitious end points. There is an uncompromising focus on establishing firm foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff engage children in 'back and forth' conversations throughout the day to develop their speaking and listening skills and, extend their vocabulary and understanding. They are adept at knowing when to join children's play and when to step back to allow them to explore. Children's resulting high achievements mean that they are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders are extremely thorough in ensuring that they and staff, have a deep understanding of the reasons some pupils might find learning difficult. They are meticulous in their assessment of individual barriers and gaps in learning. Consistently effective teaching for pupils is central to the school's highly inclusive approach. Staff pick up swiftly pupils who are not keeping up with their classmates. They are skilled at adapting teaching to help pupils learn. Leaders keep a watchful eye on pupils' progress and make well-considered changes to provision where needed. They ensure that any additional support needed is carefully matched to individual needs.

The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of their child's needs and how the school and family can best help them. They secure specialist advice to enhance support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities where needed. Additional local authority funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to provide additional targeted support. Leaders ensure that young carers and pupils from service families get tailored support for their emotional wellbeing. Provision for pupils who

Speak English as an additional language is first-rate, ensuring that they thrive academically and socially. Consequently, all groups of pupils achieve well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are, rightly, very proud of the journey the school has been on over recent years. They are uncompromising in their commitment to 'delivering inspirational teaching that develops well-rounded and responsible individuals'. Every decision is carefully considered. Leaders draw on their own reading and research as to how pupils learn best. They actively seek external advice to confirm and challenge their thinking. As a result, the school has successfully established an ambitious curriculum. Teaching is consistently high quality. Relationships with parents and carers are extremely positive. All groups of pupils achieve well. Leaders are, though, far from complacent. They systematically keep all aspects of the school's work and the impact on pupils, especially those in vulnerable groups, under review. Well-informed adjustments are made where leaders spot patterns emerging, or in response to the changing needs of pupils.

Staff are highly skilled and motivated. They appreciate being fully involved in discussions about important developments. Professional learning is closely aligned to school priorities and individual needs. Leaders take great care to avoid unnecessary demands on staff so that they can be at their best for pupils.

Governors have a thorough oversight of the school's work, with a clear understanding of what their role is and what it is not. They provide robust support and challenge for leaders, armed with a thorough understanding of the school's work and context. Governors have been diligent in their work to recruit a new executive headteacher. They are determined to maintain and build on the school's successes to 'take it to the next level'.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders' commitment to equipping pupils 'with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to thrive in modern society' is unmistakable. The different parts of the personal development programme are interwoven skilfully. Leaders ensure that the health and wellbeing curriculum incrementally builds pupils' understanding of important topics, such as healthy relationships. Religious education lessons and assemblies complement it by, for example, introducing pupils to the diversity in the school community and beyond. Staff purposefully refer to the school values throughout the day, using them to praise and remind pupils what is expected. The 'positive playground initiative' extends the deliberate fostering of pupils' attitudes and attributes to social times. Pupils enjoy the various after-school clubs. Leaders make sure they do everything they can to remove any barriers to participation.

Pupils' personal development is striking for their age. Talk is at the heart of the health and wellbeing programme. Pupils learn to consider big questions and express their views confidently. They understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the real world. The school values instil care and consideration for others and a sense of right and wrong. Pupils understand what it takes for people to get along. Their voice is heard and listened to. For example, the climate action team successfully influenced the development of a pollinator-friendly planting area. Staff diligently keep check of pupils' personal development. They

make sensible changes to the programme to revisit learning where needed. Sensitive adaptations ensure that all pupils can benefit at an appropriate level.

Great care is taken to nurture pupils' wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and talk about their feelings. They are confident to share any worries with adults. Staff are alert to the signs something may not be quite right. Additional, tailored support is provided for pupils and their families in need of some extra help.

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

Pupils thrive here. Leaders go out of their way to make sure that pupils and their families feel that they belong. Well-planned introductions to school mean that the children are already eagerly anticipating joining their Reception class in September. Older pupils act as buddies to classmates who join at other times. Warm relationships ensure that pupils feel well cared for and safe in school. Attendance is high. Staff rarely have to deal with deliberately unkind behaviour or actions. Pupils work and play happily alongside each other.

Staff are at the classroom door every morning with a positive greeting and a listening ear for any parents and carers who need a quick catch up. Pupils are invariably waiting as the doors open, keen to get into school. Staff sensitively scoop up anyone who does not find the start of the day easy. Well-established routines mean that no time is lost as pupils quickly settle to purposeful morning tasks. Classrooms are hives of activity. Pupils benefit from the time and effort leaders have put into ensuring a well-designed and skilfully delivered curriculum. Staff are well trained to meet the range of needs in their classes. Pupils achieve well. They are enthusiastic readers and well prepared for the move to junior school.

Leaders do everything they can to give pupils the very best experiences. Visits and visitors enrich learning. The range of clubs provide something for everyone. Being part of the Balksbury family is a bonus. Pupils enjoy playing with older friends and family members in the junior school at breaktimes. The shared outdoor environment offers a wealth of activities. Pupils love the opportunities they get to learn in the junior school's specialist facilities, such as the computing suite. They leave the infant school well on their way to developing the attitudes and attributes that will distinguish them as a Balksbury Citizen.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they sustain and build on the school's highly effective work so as to have a transformational impact on pupils' achievement and wider development, particularly those who face barriers to learning.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Chantele Adams.

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

Inspectors spoke with members of the executive team and other leaders, groups of staff and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair, and the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is part of a hard federation with the junior school on the same site.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Executive headteacher : Katy Thompson

Lead inspector:

Alison Bradley, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Debbie Budden, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Marshall, 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 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

268

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

270

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)

20.52%

Close to 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

1.49%

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

5.97%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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).

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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.8%	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)	5.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	14.6%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	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 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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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