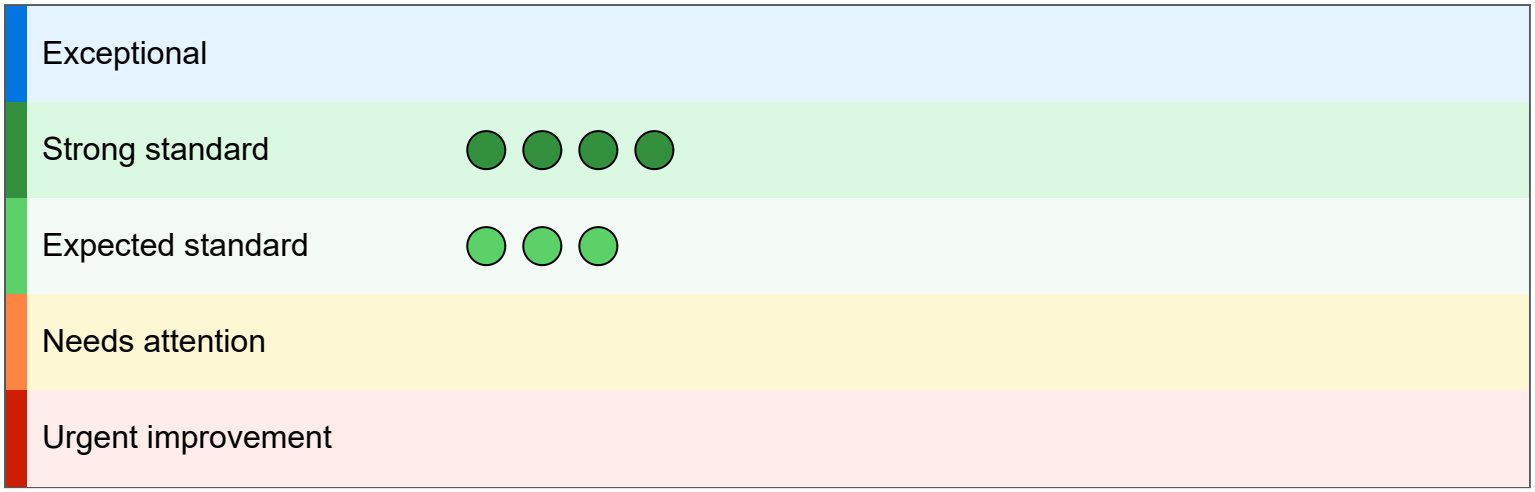
Necton VA Primary School

Address: School Road, Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk, PE37 8HT

Unique reference number (URN): 134043

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

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

The school works highly effectively with pupils and families facing significant barriers to regular attendance. Leaders have detailed systems to track and monitor pupils' attendance. They respond quickly and effectively when concerns emerge and work closely with external agencies and parents and carers to improve attendance patterns. This includes supporting pupils who join the school with previously low attendance. As a result, many pupils significantly improve their attendance over time. Leaders maintain high expectations of attendance for all pupils. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as for children in the early years.

Behaviour is orderly and purposeful across the school. Leaders have designed the environment carefully to promote calm and minimise distraction. Pupils understand routines well because staff apply expectations consistently from the Nursery onwards. As a result, pupils develop strong self-control and highly positive attitudes to learning. In classrooms, pupils are able to concentrate well. Rewards and recognition motivate pupils to try hard and contribute positively to school life. Pupils behave respectfully towards adults and one another. Bullying and serious incidents are uncommon because leaders identify concerns early and provide effective support before issues escalate.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have created a highly inclusive school culture. Staff understand pupils' needs well and respond quickly when barriers to learning emerge. Careful and thorough checks on learning help staff identify the right support for pupils at the right time. Leaders monitor pupils' needs and progress continuously to ensure that support is effective. They work closely with external agencies and the local authority to secure the right support for pupils when needed. As a result, pupils access learning confidently and participate fully in school life.

The school has a positive reputation for supporting pupils with a wide range of needs. Leaders ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium grant, is used effectively to help pupils succeed academically and socially. Due to extensive training, staff have a range of expertise to support pupils with differing needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use appropriate strategies confidently across the curriculum. They adapt teaching carefully so that pupils learn successfully alongside their peers. For example, visual aids and targeted support help pupils remain engaged with learning. Pupils move smoothly between classroom learning and additional support when needed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support. They quickly develop confidence in speaking and understanding English.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development accurately. They are reflective, analytical and ambitious for the community they serve. Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened provision carefully and strategically. This includes

establishing a nursery, developing staff expertise, and continuing to strengthen the quality of education. At the same time, leaders are able to swiftly adapt provision to meet the needs of changing and growing cohorts of pupils. Every pupil's needs and achievements are clearly understood because leaders check carefully when they join and continue to monitor them throughout their time in school.

A well-embedded culture of professional development runs through the school. Leaders prioritise staff training and develop expertise at all levels. Staff share a clear understanding of the school's priorities and work together effectively. As a result, they contribute confidently to school improvement. Staff are positive about the school's offer and leaders' support.

Leaders engage purposefully with the wider community. They have established strong partnerships with other schools, external organisation and educational projects. For example, leaders work collaboratively with other schools to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. The school's reputation in the community is positive and continues to grow.

Governors know the school well and fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They receive detailed information from leaders and use this to provide informed support and challenge. Governors understand the school's priorities clearly, including current developments such as the specialist resource base provision. They consider changes carefully and ensure that leaders maintain a strong focus on pupils' best interests.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a highly effective personal development programme that prepares pupils well for life beyond school. The school's life skills curriculum is carefully sequenced. Pupils revisit important themes regularly. This supports them to remember, in detail, important knowledge. For example, how to make and keep friends, how to live healthily and how to stay safe when online or out and about in the community. Leaders also adapt aspects of the curriculum carefully to reflect pupils' needs. The school's strong emphasis on discussion and oracy helps pupils develop confidence, resilience and empathy. Pupils discuss sensitive and sometimes contentious topics maturely and respectfully. They listen carefully to different viewpoints and explain their ideas confidently.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils value the support that adults provide and speak positively about how staff help them manage worries, friendships and emotions. Staff teach pupils practical strategies to support their wellbeing and emotional regulation. Leaders regularly check pupils' wellbeing and provide timely support when needed. As a result, pupils feel safe, listened to and cared for.

Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a rich range of wider experiences that extend their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils access an extensive and varied programme of clubs, visits and enrichment opportunities. Educational visits deepen their understanding of the curriculum and support them to develop cultural awareness. Residential visits and outdoor pursuits, such as rock climbing, encourage pupils to challenge themselves and develop resilience. Pupils enjoy these opportunities to try something new.

Pupils make a positive contribution to school life. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. Pupils learn how fundamental British values, such as democracy, work in practice. Councils, including the eco council and

values council, are well established and influential. Pupils take these roles seriously and understand how their work improves the school community. For example, they lead projects linked to recycling and environmental improvement.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Achievement is typically secure across the curriculum. Published outcomes have shown some variation over time. Leaders understand this well and have responded effectively. Pupils who join the school at different points, including in older year groups, are provided with effective support to catch up with their peers.

Pupils across the school build knowledge well from their starting points. This is because the curriculum is sequenced carefully. It is taught in a way that supports all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, consistently well. Leaders ensure that pupils encounter a wide range of texts to support their understanding of the world and to complement learning in subjects such as geography and history. As a result, pupils approach their lessons in the wider curriculum with curiosity and interest. Pupils enjoy demonstrating their quick recall of number facts. They read with enthusiasm. The schools' strengthened approach to writing is already improving the quality of pupils' work. Pupils write with increasing accuracy, confidence and stamina. However, leaders recognise that this work is not embedded fully enough to secure consistently strong achievement over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders' curriculum thinking is ambitious and coherent. Leaders have identified the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember. Subjects build logically from the early years onwards. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff teach early reading well. Pupils use their reading knowledge confidently across subjects. Leaders have sharpened the school's approach to writing. Staff have received clear guidance and effective training. This is already improving the quality of pupils' work. Pupils write at greater length, edit their work more routinely and apply ambitious vocabulary more accurately. However, this strengthened approach is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Teaching is purposeful and consistent. Staff know pupils well and explain learning clearly. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' thinking. The school is rightly proud of its focus on supporting pupils to speak confidently and elaborate on their ideas. Across the school, pupils rehearse and use quality sentence structures confidently.

Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are precise and highly responsive. Leaders and teachers identify gaps quickly and provide effective support to help pupils catch up. Teachers spot misconceptions well and adapt learning successfully. Subject leaders receive effective training and support. This helps them to lead their areas with confidence and maintain the school's high expectations for curriculum quality.

Early years **Expected standard**

Leaders have developed an ambitious and effective early years provision that gives children a positive start to school life. Leaders have expanded the provision to include a nursery and invested in staff expertise. Staff work together well to support children's development. Leaders identify children's needs quickly through careful assessment. They work closely with families and external agencies to provide effective additional support.

Warm, trusting relationships between adults and children help children settle quickly and develop confidence. Staff interactions are calm, nurturing and highly impactful. Staff encourage children to speak in full sentences and explain their ideas clearly. This supports children to quickly improve their ability to speak and communicate. Routines are prioritised right from day one, so that children feel safe and learn positive behaviours around one another.

The curriculum is carefully structured to support children's academic, social and physical development. Teaching is effective and purposeful. Staff ensure that learning moments build carefully on prior learning. This supports children to learn to read, write and calculate with confidence and accuracy. Staff design interesting and purposeful activities so that children can revisit their learning. Children enthusiastically recall nursery rhymes and apply new vocabulary accurately in discussions. They speak confidently about their learning.

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

Pupils thrive in this welcoming and inclusive school. They feel safe and cared for because staff know them well and build warm, trusting relationships with them. The school is a peaceful and orderly place to learn and make friends. From the Nursery onwards, pupils learn routines quickly. They understand the high expectations that adults have for their behaviour and learning. Staff teach pupils how to manage their emotions and treat others with kindness and respect. As a result, behaviour is positive and pupils learn without disruption. Bullying and serious incidents are rare. Pupils trust adults to deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy learning. They speak enthusiastically about school life. Pupils, including those who join the school with gaps in their learning, receive effective support. This is because staff have a large range of expertise to support pupils' differing needs. Lessons help pupils develop confidence as speakers and thinkers. Pupils discuss ideas maturely and respectfully, including when debating different viewpoints. Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum and pupils develop secure knowledge across a range of subjects. Pupils talk confidently about their learning. Younger children in the early years discuss life cycles and the natural world with enthusiasm. Pupils write with increasing confidence and accuracy because leaders have strengthened the teaching of writing.

The school provides a rich range of wider opportunities that broaden pupils' experiences and interests. Pupils values the wide range of trips, clubs and leadership opportunities available to them. They enjoy activities such as football, gardening, music and forest school. Visits to museums, castles and access to nature resources help bring classroom learning to life.

Pupils contribute positively to the school community through school council roles. This supports their understanding of how to help others, respect differences and look after the environment.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed the school's strengthened approach to writing, including in the early years, so that pupils achieve consistently highly across different subjects and year groups over time.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jane Barley

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 met with the headteacher, other school leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Norwich. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

In September 2024, the school opened a nursery for 3- to 4-year-old children.

Victoria Long: Headteacher

Lead inspector:
Hannah Stoten, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rachael Judd, Ofsted Inspector
Jo Nutbeam, 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

228
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)

32.09%
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

3.51%
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

14.91%
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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	69%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	72%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	71%	Close to average

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	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	30%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	44%	Above

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	40%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	17%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	35%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	58%	Above

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	40%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	17%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	30%	68%	-38 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	69%	-69 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	67%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	66%	-9 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	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	17%	81%	-64 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	80%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	78%	-7 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	35%	78%	-43 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	78%	-78 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	78%	-49 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	77%	-6 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	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	17%	81%	-64 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	79%	-22 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)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.4%	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)	14.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.1%	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.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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