

Dixons Silver Springs Primary

Address: School Crescent, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 1EA

Unique reference number (URN): 137951

Inspection report: 21 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those from the trust, keep a close check on pupils' rates of attendance and on standards of behaviour. The trust has clear ways to compare the school's work against that of its other schools, and it successfully challenges and supports the school to continually improve pupils' rates of attendance. Over time, leaders' determined actions have resulted in pupils' attendance rising in line with the national average. Leaders' focus on persistent absences is reducing this issue year-on-year. Leaders welcome pupils who were often absent from their previous school to Dixons Silver Springs Primary. Staff work to build positive new habits of attendance by these pupils, giving them a full chance to gain the education that they need.

The positive, supportive culture that leaders have established helps pupils to behave well. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They move about the school calmly and follow the school's rules. Leaders support any child who may struggle with managing their behaviour. Leaders and staff intervene successfully to manage any bullying between pupils. Pupils know that the school never tolerates other serious issues, such as discrimination. Pupils' understanding of how to behave at school, at home and in the community starts from a solid footing.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders give much consideration to their early years curriculum and the experiences that they want children to have at the school. Teaching builds children's communication and language successfully, as well as their personal and physical skills. Typically, staff talk with children and explain important words to them. Staff create teaching opportunities to introduce important concepts to the children. For example, they explain about 2-dimensional shapes in mathematics and how to make a map from a bird's-eye view. Children make suitable progress through the curriculum. Generally, the Reception Year lays the groundwork for children's learning in Year 1.

Staff are genuinely interested in the children and make them the focus of their attention. This leads to high-quality relationships in which children feel safe and secure, such as with their named key person.

Leaders ensure that staff make effective links with parents and carers to support children's learning at home. Staff make use of parents' concerns and the school's own checks to spot any children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school collaborates well with other professionals to secure expert help for these children, should they need it. Children who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND benefit much from the school's carefully crafted curriculum and expert teaching.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

At the heart of this school is leaders' ambition to celebrate and support each pupil's uniqueness. The school links well with other professionals and with parents and carers to

understand the needs of each pupil. Mostly, staff pinpoint and respond to the barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing swiftly and accurately, such as for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). On occasion, some of the school's work to identify and act on pupils' needs is less clear and successful.

Leaders and staff understand the impact of poverty, disadvantage and SEND on the lives of pupils and their families. The school support parents with whatever help or advice that it can provide. Leaders use extra funding carefully to enhance the education of disadvantaged pupils.

Parents whose children access the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND speak of the far-reaching impact that this has on them. In response to any changes in pupils' wellbeing, learning or behaviour, the highly skilled staff in that provision adapt their support for pupils quickly and effectively. Leaders, including from the trust, make sure that pupils who attend alternative provision used by the school have their needs met. Pupils are acknowledged, respected and feel that they belong.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

At the core of leaders' success is their commitment to provide a welcoming and aspirational education for all of the school's pupils. Part of the school is a new and highly successful specially resourced provision for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In addition, leaders welcome pupils with a range of other needs, such as pupils who may have struggled with their learning at other schools.

Leaders managed the recent change of the school from being part of one academy trust to becoming part of another with skill, determination and patience. This process has enhanced the school's work. Staff feel well supported to understand the new arrangements for the running of the school. They are positive about leaders' support for their workload, wellbeing and their teaching of pupils.

Leaders, including from the trust, have recently set the school on a clear and ambitious path of development for its long-term future. To build on the school's successes, the trust has added further expertise to the oversight and development of many aspects of the school's work. For example, the school now has even more expertise on safeguarding, SEND, curriculum and teaching. The quality of pupils' education already benefits from this new phase of the school's life. For instance, teachers' work now connects well to that of other schools on how to build pupils' knowledge successfully.

The trust understands the school's strengths and priorities. Its board of trustees has clear ways to check on the work of leaders. It provides suitable challenge about the school's current achievements and its main goals for further improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders think carefully how the school's provision can build new opportunities for pupils' wider development. Staff teach pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the wider skills that they need for their future lives. For the pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, leaders match the

development of these skills well to pupils' needs. For example, pupils learn to deal with their own personal care needs, manage their emotions and play alongside others. Leaders and staff guide all pupils at the school in how to respond to changes in routines and experiences, such as when they join a new class or move up to secondary school.

The school has selected a suitable curriculum that it uses for pupils' education about relationships and health. Leaders carefully consider where to add further topics, such as to teach pupils about respect for women and girls. This focus is part of the school's wider, successful work to develop pupils' understanding of what is right, fair and equal.

Pupils develop an adequate knowledge of fundamental British values. For instance, they know why Britain has laws that help to keep everyone safe and prevent crime. Pupils recognise that democracy means that their own views matter about different issues. They know that families can be different.

Staff teach pupils how to act sensibly near bodies of water, such as the local dam. Leaders and staff teach pupils many topics about online safety. For example, staff guide pupils about the dangers of social media use and how to respond to any upsetting online content.

Leaders select informative educational trips to enhance pupils' wider knowledge, for example visits to Tatton Park, a museum and an air raid shelter. Pupils are particularly pleased with the extra skills that they develop through the school's workshops, such as those on skipping, cycling and first aid.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

In some year groups, some current pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the basics of reading and writing. Over time, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 whose reading meets the expected standard is below average. In addition, some pupils do not remember well what staff have taught them previously in some curriculum subjects. This means that the school does not prepare some pupils as well as it could for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' attainment is improving year on year. Their outcomes in mathematics and writing by the end of Year 6 are similar to the national average. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make positive progress through the school's curriculum. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The school has suitable, logically ordered subject curriculums that offer the breadth and depth of knowledge that pupils need to learn. However, some teaching does not match well to what leaders intend. Some activities that teachers design do not help pupils to learn curriculum content successfully.

Leaders and staff enthuse pupils about the joys of books and reading. This starts well in the early years. However, throughout the school, some teaching does not build effectively enough on pupils' knowledge of the basics of reading and writing. On occasion, teachers' decisions are less successful about what pupils need to practise, revisit or build on when they learn to read and write.

Leaders provide staff with helpful professional learning that develops their subject knowledge. Leaders from the multi-academy trust now responsible for the school have an in-depth understanding of effective curriculum and teaching in the primary phase, including in reading and writing. The trust's actions have started to enhance the quality of teaching at the school effectively.

Generally, staff adapt their support to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn well. In the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, leaders have set up a well-designed curriculum offer. Capable staff expertly teach the pupils who access this resource.

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

Pupils speak very highly of their school because they are happy, make lots of friends and enjoy their lessons. They benefit from the wide range of extra experiences that the school provides. For example, some pupils act in the roles of 'breakfast baristas' to support pupils' access to food and drink. Other pupils help with organising games at breaktimes and lunchtime. These activities and many more develop pupils' sense of responsibility well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are valued by leaders and staff, who include them fully in the school's provision. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND flourish in their learning, behaviour and wellbeing. This is because of leaders' well-thought-out curriculum in that provision and staff's skilful teaching and support for pupils.

Throughout the school, including in the early years, pupils' positive behaviour means that they can focus on their lessons. Issues of bullying among pupils are rare and taken seriously by leaders. Leaders and staff support parents and carers to advise children on their safe use of the internet at home.

Pupils who may have struggled at other schools, or face other challenges in their lives, find that this is a school that welcomes them. Pupils' needs are prioritised by leaders, including by leaders from the trust. Typically, pupils have an equal chance to become their best. Their development and success are celebrated by leaders and staff.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving year on year, as is their attendance at the school. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment in reading is below the national average. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the fundamentals of reading and writing. Sometimes, pupils do not develop as much curriculum knowledge as they need. This is because some aspects of teaching the school's curriculum are less well developed than others.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to sharpen the ways that staff identify and act on barriers to pupils' learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff select activities that teach the specific knowledge and skills that the school intends, so that pupils are fully ready for the next stage of their education.
 - Leaders should make sure that staff make effective checks on pupils' knowledge of the basics of reading and writing, to inform what to teach pupils next and help pupils to catch up in their learning.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Dixons Academies 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), Luke Sparkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Blackburn.

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 met with the principal and other senior leaders, including those responsible for early years, safeguarding and special educational needs during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the local authority and the board of trustees, as well as the CEO and other trust leaders.

This inspection took place from 21 to 22 July 2026.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

At its previous inspection, this school was part of a different multi-academy trust. It joined Dixons Academies Trust in March 2026.

A new principal has been appointed to join the school from September 2026.

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions, both of which are unregistered.

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which opened in September 2025. This caters for up to 26 pupils with a primary need of speech, language and communication. At the time of this inspection, 26 pupils accessed this resource.

Principal: Deborah Mason

Lead inspector:

Tim Vaughan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kate Bowker, His Majesty's Inspector

Emily Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Jonny Foster-Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 21 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

417

Above 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

472

Well above 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)

54.33%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.76%

Above 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

18.47%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above 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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	54%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	52%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	42%	60%	Below

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	61%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	57%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30%	44%	Below

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	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42%	60%	Below

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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	52%	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	47%	68%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	69%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	67%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	30%	66%	-36 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	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	42%	78%	-36 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	71%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	80%	78%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	65%	78%	-12 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	74%	79%	-6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	52%	79%	-28 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)	6.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	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)	20.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	15.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	20.9%	16.2%	Above

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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