

Newton-le-Willows Primary School

Address: Sanderling Road, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 9UF

Unique reference number (URN): 104775

Inspection report: 6 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' work has improved pupils' attendance. Attendance is now close to national averages and has risen over time. This improvement is evident for all groups of pupils. Persistent absence has reduced, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders track attendance closely and work with families to address concerns early. They provide caring support to help pupils attend more regularly. Leaders continue to focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those eligible for free school meals to maintain improvements. This includes working with other professionals to do all that they can to remove any barriers pupils may have.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Leaders have set clear expectations, and staff apply them consistently. Pupils feel safe and supported. Parents report positively on how leaders manage behaviour and deal with incidents. Leaders do not tolerate bullying and respond to concerns promptly. Staff deal with any unkind behaviour or hurtful language quickly and consistently. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons and at social times. They are proud of their school and say that pupils behave well. Staff know pupils well and make reasonable adjustments for those with SEND, helping them engage fully in school life.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement is uneven across subjects. Pupils do not achieve as well in the wider curriculum as they do in reading, writing and mathematics. In some subjects, pupils' work shows gaps in knowledge. This limits how well pupils build their understanding of key concepts as they move through the school. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities show similar patterns. As a result, pupils are not equally well prepared for their next stage of education across all subjects.

Pupils' achievement in the national tests has improved in recent years. Published outcomes show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen since 2023 and is now typically in line with the national averages. This reflects leaders' focus on strengthening teaching and the curriculum in English and mathematics. Pupils now leave the school better prepared for the next stage of education in these subjects than they were previously.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The quality of the curriculum and teaching is uneven across different subjects. In some subjects, leaders are still refining what pupils should learn and when. This means that staff do not always have clear guidance about what to teach. As a result, pupils do not always build their knowledge securely over time. In subjects beyond English and mathematics,

checks on learning are inconsistent. Leaders cannot always identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or judge the impact of teaching.

In early years and key stage 1, teaching in reading, writing, and mathematics does not always secure essential knowledge. Some pupils are not ready for the next stage of learning. Teaching does not consistently extend pupils' spoken and written language. Pupils who need to catch up do not always receive support quickly enough.

Leaders aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Further work is needed to ensure clear curriculum thinking across all subjects, secure subject knowledge for staff and effective support for all pupils. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have recognised the need to take action to strengthen English and mathematics across the school. They have adopted ambitious curriculums and improved teachers' subject knowledge. This has led to greater consistency in teaching and clearer expectations for staff.

Early years

Needs attention 

The quality of provision in the early years is uneven. Children are not consistently well prepared for key stage 1. The curriculum is new and there is a need for additional training for staff. This is particularly the case in supporting children to build skills in communication, language and early literacy. Staff do not always notice children's needs promptly. This can limit support for those who need extra help. Children's language and vocabulary development is not always secure. Leadership is limited because there is no designated early years leader. This makes it harder for senior leaders to keep oversight and maintain consistent quality.

Leaders have focused on developing the learning environment. This has been carefully considered and is now ready to support staff's teaching of the new curriculum. Staff build positive relationships with children and families. This helps children feel confident and supported. Children take part in a range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. These activities help them develop social skills, independence and the ability to work with others. Children also learn to explore ideas, solve problems and try new things. The environment and daily routines give children opportunities to practise skills they will need in key stage 1.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders are developing inclusive practices, but some systems remain inconsistent. Processes to identify and assess pupils' individual needs are in place but they are not always applied well enough. As a result, some pupils do not receive prompt support. When identification is delayed, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities experience gaps in their learning and make slower progress.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress and review the support in place. However, these checks do not focus sharply enough on the impact of support. In some cases, staff continue with

approaches that have limited effect. This limits pupils' progress and independence over time.

Staff receive training to support pupils with additional needs, but its impact varies. Sometimes, staff adapt teaching well and make appropriate adjustments. However, there are times where staff lack the expertise needed to support pupils effectively. This results in pockets of uneven practice and different experiences for pupils with similar needs.

Leaders work with families and external professionals to support pupils and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. This work helps some pupils to access support beyond the classroom.

Pupil premium funding provides additional academic and pastoral support for disadvantaged pupils. This includes targeted help to support learning and emotional needs. Pupils who are known to children's social care receive appropriate support, including work with a range of professionals.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders do not have a clear enough view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Oversight of curriculum design, teaching quality and achievement across subjects is inconsistent. This includes oversight of different groups of pupils. Leaders do not use assessment information consistently well to identify pupils at risk of underachievement in the wider curriculum or to ensure that support is timely and effective. As a result, leaders cannot always assure themselves that their aspirations for inclusion are realised in daily practice, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Governance is committed and supportive but requires strengthening. Governors are well trained and understand their roles. They manage resources carefully and know how funding supports pupils' needs. They show regard for staff wellbeing and workload. However, governors are not routinely well informed about how well pupils learn in all subjects. This limits how well governors can support leaders and hold them fully to account.

Despite these weaknesses, leaders make decisions with pupils at the centre. Leaders have identified key priorities, and this work has begun to bring improvement. There is now a need for greater urgency, sharper oversight of the curriculum and teaching, and clearer evaluation of impact. Leaders and governors should ensure that assessment information is used more effectively to support pupils who are at risk of underachievement. This is needed to ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, achieve as well as they should.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

The personal development offer is not yet as broad or complete as it should be. Pupils have limited opportunities to learn about different cultures and communities. Learning about values such as respect, fairness and democracy is uneven. Activities such as voting in assemblies and fundraising support these values, but some pupils do not show a secure understanding. Enrichment opportunities, including clubs, are limited. This reduces pupils'

chances to develop wider skills and experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils currently have few chances to take part in music, sports, creative activities or external learning experiences beyond the curriculum. This restricts the development of existing talents or the discovery of new ones.

Leaders provide effective pastoral support. Pupils and families are well known to staff. Pupils feel safe and happy and report that bullying is rare. Pupils learn to manage their feelings and talk about their wellbeing. Relationships across the school are caring and respectful. Staff make adjustments to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping them access activities and engage in school life. The curriculum and thematic weeks support pupils' personal development and help them to make safe choices. In Year 6, pupils can become 'truly trusted', a role that recognises their maturity and reliability. These pupils take on leadership responsibilities across school life, such as supporting staff and visitors on open days and helping younger pupils in assemblies and reading. These experiences help pupils develop teamwork and independence. Staff support pupils to develop themselves through the school's 'STRIVE' values. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and resilience.

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

Pupils receive a warm welcome each morning from staff who know them well. This helps pupils to feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Pupils build secure relationships with staff and with one another. Pupils feel confident that adults will support them when needed. As a result, behaviour around the school and in lessons is calm and orderly. If unkind behaviour occurs, staff address this swiftly. Leaders have a relentless focus on improving attendance. As a result, most pupils now attend regularly, including disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils enjoy learning and engage positively in lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils typically achieve in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, achievement is not as strong across some other subjects. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils, but these do not always translate into teaching that meets pupils' needs. For example, disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not always receive the support they need to learn all that they should. As a result, some pupils, including some children in the early years, are not as well prepared for their next steps as they could be.

Pupils feel that they belong to the school community. This helps them to develop confidence in sharing their ideas and opinions. Pupils enjoy going on visits, such as a residential and a trip to London. These enrich pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Some pupils take part in extra-curricular activities, including yoga and keyboard, although these are limited. Pupils would welcome more opportunities to develop their talents and interests.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to stay safe. However, they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. They have limited opportunities to develop a secure understanding of different cultures and communities.

Next steps

- Leaders should complete their work on the curriculum and ensure that staff receive effective support to teach and assess pupils' progress effectively across all subjects. This includes adapting the curriculum effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
 - Leaders should ensure that staff in early years and key stage 1 are supported effectively to teach reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts so that pupils develop their accuracy and fluency.
 - Leaders should strengthen their systems so they can better identify the underlying cause of any weakness and take swift and precise action to improve it.
 - Leaders should extend the personal development and wellbeing offer to include enrichment activities that develop pupils' skills and talents and strengthen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.
 - Leaders should ensure that the attendance of pupils with SEND and those eligible for free school meals continues to improve, so that these pupils access teaching regularly and make sustained progress.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Alex Huskisson.

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, assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, some subject leaders and the chair and vice-chair of governors during the inspection.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Lauren Chisnall

Lead inspector:

Frith Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Gary Bevin, Ofsted Inspector

Karen Morris, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Finnegan, 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

602

Well 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

637

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)

25.66%

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

3.16%

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

12.79%

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

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)

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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
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	66%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	80%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	71%	Below

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	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	43%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34%	44%	Close to average

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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44%	58%	Below

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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44%	59%	Below

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	41%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	43%	69%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	67%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	34%	66%	-32 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	57%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	78%	-22 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	57%	78%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	79%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	79%	-35 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)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	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)	14.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	16.3%	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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