

Rectory CofE Primary School

Address: Rectory Road, North Ashton, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, WN4 0QF

Unique reference number (URN): 104797

Inspection report: 9 June 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 make attendance a priority. They promote regular attendance across the school. They check attendance closely and spot patterns early. Leaders act quickly to support pupils and families who need help. Leaders understand their community and take balanced action. Leaders have secured strong improvements in attendance. Persistent absence has reduced dramatically. Staff work effectively with parents and carers, as well as outside agencies, to remove barriers to pupils coming to school. Where pupils who have unavoidable medical appointments, leaders effectively ensure that this is minimised as much as possible. This is helping to improve overall attendance. Pupils generally attend well and benefit from school life.

Leaders and staff set clear expectations for behaviour. Many pupils meet these expectations. Pupils stay calm, show respect and take pride in their work. Many pupils manage their own behaviour well. Some pupils who need extra support receive it promptly. Relationships between staff and pupils support this approach. In the resourced provision, staff adapt their support carefully to meet pupils' needs. Staff deal with any discriminatory behaviour and incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. They make it clear that this behaviour is not acceptable. Overall, the school provides a positive school environment for pupils to succeed.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of how well children are doing in the early years. They use this to shape a caring, secure and inclusive setting where every child feels valued. Staff get to know children quickly, spotting their individual needs and adjusting what they offer so that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who maybe disadvantaged, receive the right support.

Through regular, meaningful interactions staff help children develop increasingly accurate speaking and listening skills. This enables them to communicate more confidently, build friendships and work well together. Children show growing confidence and cooperate positively during play and learning. Staff ensure that there is an emphasis on supporting pupils wellbeing which helps children feel safe, settled and ready to learn. From their starting points, children make steady progress and gain the knowledge and skills needed for Year 1. Early reading is promoted effectively through a range of stories, rhymes and songs. Children in the Reception class continue this journey as they move through the phonics programme with increasing confidence. They also become more secure when working with numbers, showing increasing accuracy and enjoyment. Overall, children are supported to develop socially, emotionally and academically.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is a strength of the school. Leaders have a clear and thoughtful approach to identifying and supporting pupils with a wide variety of vulnerabilities and additional needs. Staff use the systems in school fully to understand each child's strengths, barriers and

vulnerabilities. This helps them to provide the right support at the right time. Teachers regularly review the support that they provide. This helps them to continually monitor whether the support is having the desired impact for pupils. It also allows them to effectively, where necessary, adapt the provision or identify any changing or emerging barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or pupils known or previously known to social care.

Support for disadvantaged pupils is targeted well. Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. This allows disadvantaged pupils to benefit successfully from increasingly effective and responsive provision. Pupils in the resourced provision, including some disadvantaged pupils, receive highly effective support. Staff meet their needs with care, skill and consistency. The provision runs across two sites, but both offer the same high-quality support. This ensures a consistent joined up approach.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors have created a culture of shared purpose, including high expectations and inclusion. They understand the school's context, strengths and priorities. They keep a clear focus on improving outcomes. They respond to changes in pupil demographics, such as the increase in pupils with high level special educational needs and/or disabilities, and adapt provision where needed. They work with external professionals to review provision and check for its impact.

Leaders, including governors, show a clear commitment to inclusion. For example, they have worked with the local authority to successfully establish a satellite site to effectively support pupils' needs across the local authority. In addition, they have managed difficult staff decisions and turbulence which at times has slowed the rate of improvements. However, leaders and governors have handled this carefully to maintain stability and support long term improvement. Leaders and governors make decisions with pupils, including those facing additional barriers, at the centre of their decision making.

Leaders plan professional learning for staff carefully. They base this on evidence and closely align this to the school's priorities. Every member of staff is supported well to have the skills they need to meet pupils' needs. Leaders carefully consider workload and wellbeing. They provide time, support and resources to help staff carry out their roles effectively. Staff feel supported. They understand the school's direction and how they contribute to its improvement. They work together as a purposeful and collaborative team.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They monitor funding and ensure resources are used appropriately. They provide both support and challenge to leaders. Parents and carers speak positively about the school. They value the quality of education and opportunities available.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's context and design a personal development programme that reflects pupils needs accurately. They prioritise a strong sense of community and staff model this through their daily practice. As a result pupils understand their role in school and the wider community. They show respect for others and value working with different

generations. Through outdoor learning and assemblies for example, pupils gain an understanding of their impact on the environment and learn to care for it.

The personal, social, health and economic education supports pupils to build knowledge about healthy lifestyles, how to prevent bullying and manage risk. Pupils learn about different relationships and develop an age-appropriate understanding of consent. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online and offline, ensuring they make informed and responsible choices. Leaders plan meaningful experiences that all pupils access. These include residential visits and trips alongside opportunities to meet visitors such as the local Member of Parliament. These strengthen pupils' understanding of the democratic processes and how they can influence change. Leaders take effective action to remove barriers so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who attend the resourced provision, fully access these opportunities.

Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including dodgeball, boxercise and cricket. These opportunities support pupils physical development. Pupils are proud to take on their leadership roles as various ambassadors across the school. This gives pupils an active, purposeful voice in improving their school.

The curriculum strengthens pupils' awareness of diversity. For example, pupils learn about awareness for the deaf and refugees. This helps them to develop respect and understanding for others. They build a clear understanding of the fundamental British values and apply these in their interactions. Recent changes to the personal development offer effectively supports pupils with this. There has been a clear improvement in this since the previous inspection.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Staff respond quickly to pupils' needs and provide nurture support where required. As a result, pupils feel safe, work well together and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils who are capable of attaining well in national curriculum tests, do not consistently do as well as they could. This includes some pupils who are disadvantaged. Although there have been recent improvements in pupil outcomes in reading and the phonics screening check, this has not been replicated successfully enough in mathematics and writing. As a result, some pupils across the wider school are not as well prepared as they could be for their next stage in education. This is largely due to gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge, which are not addressed quickly enough. This hinders pupils achievement across subjects.

That said, pupils' outcomes in national assessments do not always reflect their true achievement in school. For example, pupils in the resourced provision who have high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points. They achieve particularly well in communication. For example, pupils can

increasingly express their views and ideas. These pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have a clear understanding where teaching is not as effective. They are resolutely focused on ensuring less effective practice improves swiftly. In some instances, the actions taken have proved successful. Currently however, teaching in some subjects and year groups remains not as effective enough. This is in part because teacher checks on learning are not sharp enough. Gaps in knowledge and understanding remain for some pupils. Coupled with this, at times, pupils are unsure about what to do as teachers do not consistently adapt explanations and explain new ideas well.

Leaders prioritise pupils having secure early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils who can learn phonics do so well. Books which they read help them to build their confidence and fluency. However, some pupils struggle with their writing. They are not supported well enough to gain a secure understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve the curriculum and quality of teaching. For example, since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that the curriculum is logically ordered with key knowledge identified. Pupils in the resourced provision receive high quality, effective teaching. They have skilled support and guidance from well trained teachers and teaching assistants. In the wider school, where teaching is more effective, teachers match learning closely to pupils' needs. They choose activities carefully. Teachers check on learning precisely.

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

Pupils do well in this small and welcoming school community. Everyone feels included and part of the Rectory Church of England school. Pupils enjoy being involved in school life and take part in the many opportunities on offer. For example, every pupil can join external sporting competitions to represent their school.

On the whole, pupils are typically prepared well for the next stage of their education. Leaders and staff help pupils to overcome any difficulties that might affect their learning. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities particularly well, including pupils in the school's specialist provision. These pupils often make rapid gains from their starting points. For some other pupils, there is more to do in order for them to achieve their true potential.

Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities that enrich their time in school. They take part in events such as residential visits which helps them to build confidence and independence. Pupils also enjoy contributing to the life of the church. For example, they take part in celebrations such as 'Faith and Feast'. This allows pupils to support the church community and reflect on shared values. These experiences help pupils to give back to their wider community around the school.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They want to do their best for their teachers. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand the school's expectations and respond positively to staff guidance. When in lessons, they usually listen well, stay focused and work hard. They take pride in what they achieve. Staff build secure, caring relationships with pupils. They know pupils well and recognise when they need extra help. Staff provide the right support at the right time.

Pupils show respect for one another and staff. They play well together and include others in their activities. Overall, this creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They have someone who they turn to when they need some support. Pupils who find communication more tricky can show that they feel safe. Leaders deal with bullying quickly and effectively if it happens. Pupils attendance continues to improve at pace. As a result, more pupils are attending school regularly.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use checks on pupils' learning more consistently to identify any gaps which pupils have in their knowledge. They should support teachers to use these checks effectively so that they can successfully address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
 - Leaders should ensure that they embed highly effective teaching across the school so that all groups of pupils gain the knowledge they should across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should strengthen the teaching of pupils foundational writing and mathematics knowledge so that pupils build on what they already know and achieve well.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Nicola Phythian.

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 the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and various other staff or leaders throughout the inspection. The lead inspector also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a member of the Diocese of Liverpool.

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection was 23 October 2024.

The school has two resourced based provision. One of the resourced based provision operates at a separate site approximately 25 minutes from the main school site. Both resourced provision caters for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All

pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. All pupils have a diagnosis of autism. Some pupils have additional needs such as social, emotional mental health (SEMH) needs. The total number of pupils in the resourced provision classes is 42.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Richard Brook

Lead inspector:

Stuart Perkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Linda Griffiths, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

133

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

210

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)

45.90%

Well above 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

19.55%

Well 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

14.29%

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

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	33%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	39%	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	49%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	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	56%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	40%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	33%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	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	23%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	8%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	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	41%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40%	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	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	45%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	26%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	15%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	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	23%	68%	-45 pp
2024/25 (final)	27%	69%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	8%	67%	-60 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 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	41%	80%	-39 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	80%	-49 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	78%	-38 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	51%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	45%	78%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	78%	-24 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	53%	77%	-24 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	26%	80%	-54 pp
2024/25 (final)	27%	81%	-53 pp
2023/24 (final)	15%	79%	-64 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	79%	-46 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)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	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)	23.7%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	27.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	15.9%	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.

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