

St Aidan's CofE Primary School Billinge

Address: Off London Fields, Billinge, Wigan, Lancashire, WN5 7LS

Unique reference number (URN): 104798

Inspection report: 19 May 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 had a notable impact on pupils' attendance. Although absence rates remain above the national average, they are declining over time. Leaders carefully track pupils' attendance and check the reasons for any absences from school. They work in partnership with parents, carers and a range of agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need to attend school regularly. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is declining. This is true for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils typically behave well in school. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. This is because there are well-established routines in place, which they follow each day. Pupils play well together. Disruption to learning and the use of suspensions from school for poor behaviour are rare. Staff are trained to recognise how to calm down situations and help pupils deal with their emotions. This helps pupils to improve their conduct. The school deals swiftly and effectively with any incidents of bullying, including online incidents.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a suitable curriculum in the early years. Staff generally deliver it as intended. Typically, children engage enthusiastically with well-thought-out and accessible activities across all areas of learning. Staff teach children phonics well. Children learn to read with increasing fluency and accuracy and enjoy the stories that staff read to them. They build their understanding of early mathematics. Leaders' work to improve early letter formation means that children are beginning to write letters and words correctly.

Staff talk to children and model important words. Children sing songs and learn rhymes to increase the words they know. Staff ask well-chosen questions to help children learn and understand important information. As a result of their actions and observations, staff know how well children are progressing socially, emotionally and academically.

Staff teach children how to brush their teeth and wash their hands. Children behave well, stay safe and take turns because of the consistent routines that staff put in place.

Staff work closely with parents and carers. Staff identify and support children's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as early as possible. This helps children to overcome barriers to their learning. Overall, children are ready for their move into Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the needs of all pupils are carefully considered and acted on. Staff identify the barriers that some pupils face and put in place suitable support that helps pupils to learn.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access learning well alongside others. These pupils are well supported because of the decisions that leaders take. Staff receive training that helps them to understand how to tailor their support to meet pupils' needs. Leaders and staff work with external professionals, for example dyslexia assessors and speech and language therapists, to make sure pupils get the necessary help to succeed. Many pupils overcome the challenges they face and succeed in their learning of the curriculum.

Leaders use additional funding well to make sure that those pupils who are disadvantaged have the support that they need. Pupils have extra help to solve problems or to refine their understanding.

Leaders ensure that pupils who face challenges in their lives have the opportunity to talk to someone if they need support. Pupils benefit from working with the therapy dogs or talking with trained staff. This helps them to share their worries and improve their wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school. They have improved the curriculum and the early years provision, and they have put effective strategies in place to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders work with appropriate professionals to secure the right provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have identified that some pupils do not master handwriting and spelling well enough and have begun to take suitable action.

Leaders support staff's professional learning well. This means that pupils with SEND are supported effectively. Staff have been trained to help pupils to manage their emotions and build resilience to cope with any challenges they face. Leaders prioritise support for staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff are happy working in the school.

Governors know that the school has been on a journey of improvement. They recognise the positive impact that leaders' actions have had on the school's work. Governors carefully scrutinise the work of leaders. They hold leaders to account for their actions. Governors meet their statutory duties. They ensure that the additional funding that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used correctly.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. They say their children are cared for well and that they are safe. Leaders work closely with the church community, which provides additional opportunities to enhance pupils' education and their enjoyment of school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have considered and implemented a suitable programme to foster pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), acquire the skills and knowledge they need to understand the world around them. They show a depth of understanding and tolerance towards others. They know it is important to be kind to each other. Pupils appreciate that other people may hold different opinions to their own. Pupils' attitudes indicate that they have respect for others. Pupils

understand that some pupils may face challenges in their learning and need extra help from staff. Pupils support each other through their care and friendships. Typically, they develop an understanding of other religions and the differences between people in modern society.

Staff help pupils to look after their own mental health well. Pupils talk openly about how it is important not to hold sad feelings inside. Pupils, including those with SEND and pupils who are facing challenges in their lives, are supported to manage these emotions through the school's effective pastoral support. They know what actions to take to keep themselves safe online and offline. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

Pupils enjoy the range of visits and other opportunities that are on offer to widen their horizons. For example, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have individual music tuition at the school. Other pupils work alongside an artist to produce high-quality work. Pupils access a wide range of enrichment clubs after school. The take-up of these opportunities is high, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils gain a sense of responsibility through their leadership roles. For example, they are school councillors and ambassadors for mathematics and English. Recently, pupil litter pickers found a hedgehog, who they have called Aidan. They took it to the vets as it was unwell. Now pupils are fundraising for hedgehog welfare by making and selling elderflower jam.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils' readiness for the next stage of their education is variable. Some pupils do not gain a secure foundation in handwriting and spelling. Pupils' handwriting is often poor because they do not form letters well enough. This means that the words that some pupils write are difficult to read. Pupils do not consistently transfer the spellings that they have learned into their writing. The work produced by some pupils is untidy and lacks care. This is because leaders have not prioritised this area enough.

In contrast, pupils have a firm grasp of number and calculation, and they read with fluency and confidence. In other subjects, pupils typically know and remember more of what they have been taught. Over time, pupils attain as well as, and in some cases, better than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This includes pupils with barriers to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well in many aspects of their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

In most subjects, leaders check the quality of the curriculum and the way it is taught to help identify areas for improvement. However, their checks on the teaching of basic skills have not helped teachers to ensure that they teach spelling and handwriting well enough so that pupils master these key skills. Pupils are not consistently taught how to hold their pencil

correctly to form letters. Teachers do not ensure that pupils correct the spellings in their work.

Leaders think carefully about the design of the school's broad curriculum, including the development of early number skills and more complex mathematical concepts. The curriculum is generally taught well. Teachers know what to teach and when this should happen. Typically, teaching builds on what pupils already know because teachers check for misconceptions and help pupils to catch up. Reading is a high priority from the early years to Year 6.

Leaders provide staff with appropriate training to deliver the curriculum content. This means that they have the subject knowledge that they need to teach. Staff also use well-chosen resources to help pupils to secure their subject knowledge. Teachers adapt how they teach the curriculum so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to access their learning.

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

Pupils are at the heart of every decision that leaders take. Pupils' needs are carefully considered from the moment they start at the school. Pupils are nurtured and their wellbeing is promoted effectively.

Pupils are kind and courteous to others. They behave well and most attend school often. Pupils trust staff to resolve any unkindness, including bullying. Pupils are caring and tolerant towards others. They are inspired by their reading to raise money for charities to help refugees. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in the community and online.

Pupils benefit from the variety of extra-curricular clubs that the school offers. For example, they perform in musicals and sing in a choir. Pupils get fit and healthy, such as through park runs and sports. At playtimes, they take part in active games or dance to music. Older pupils act responsibly when they walk on the track around the large field during breaktimes, talking to their friends. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in activities.

Mostly, pupils enjoy their learning because they access a well-thought-out curriculum. They benefit from the extra help that staff provide in their lessons. They take part in the daily 'Shine' session where misconceptions are addressed. However, they do not have well-formed handwriting. At times, pupils do not check and correct errors in their spelling. This is because staff do not provide them with the guidance and opportunities to do so. Even so, by the time they leave school, pupils generally attain well in national tests and assessments. This includes those pupils who have barriers to learning.

Children in the early years learn to read and develop early number skills. They become more independent in the well-thought-out environment. They enjoy using their new knowledge in their play.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff routinely identify and address gaps in pupils' handwriting and spelling skills so that they write legibly and accurately in English and other subjects across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should build on their work with individuals and groups of pupils who have barriers to attendance so they attend school more regularly.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Fiona Thomas.

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, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors, and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2019.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rachel Fisher

Lead inspector:

Ruth Baldwin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Phil Dickson, Ofsted Inspector

Jeanette Westhead, 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

167

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)

18.56%

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

8.38%

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

22.16%

Well above 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	81%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	60%	Above

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	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	73%	Above

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	86%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	71%	Above

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	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

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	82%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	67%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	94%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	94%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	100%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	82%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	82%	68%	15 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	67%	16 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	94%	80%	15 pp
2024/25 (final)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	80%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	94%	78%	16 pp
2024/25 (final)	100%	78%	22 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	78%	6 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	82%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	79%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	7.0%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	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)	15.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.9%	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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