

Brownlow Fold Primary School

Address: Darley Street, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 3DX

Unique reference number (URN): 105149

Inspection report: 10 February 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils make generally secure progress through the curriculum, with most achieving results in national tests that are broadly in line with national averages. Across year groups, pupils typically recall prior learning and apply key knowledge as intended. This reflects the curriculum's sequence and expectations of leaders. Early reading develops well. Pupils, including children in the early years, use phonics confidently. Older pupils speak with enthusiasm about the books that they enjoy.

Achievement in national assessments reflects pupils' learning, with most pupils meeting expected standards by the end of key stage 2. Where knowledge is secure, pupils articulate their thinking clearly and demonstrate what they know, remember and can do. Leaders' work to support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables these groups to access the curriculum with appropriate support.

A small proportion of pupils, particularly low prior attainers, display some gaps in key vocabulary, transcription and grammar, which can limit the confident application of new learning. Despite this variation, pupils typically gain the knowledge and skills that they need for their next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' attendance and have established rigorous systems to monitor, track and respond to absence. They identify pupils who are not attending regularly and work closely with families and other professionals to secure improvement. Expectations for attendance are set clearly from the early years, helping children develop positive habits quickly. As a result, overall attendance sits broadly in line with national figures, with disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attending above national averages. Leaders' actions have had a positive impact on improving attendance and reducing persistent absence for these groups.

Behaviour across the school is calm, settled and conducive to learning. Leaders have established clear routines that support orderly movement around the school and smooth transitions between activities. Pupils typically remain on task in lessons. They show motivation and demonstrate respectful conduct. Staff understand the school's context and apply behaviour policies consistently, ensuring that issues are addressed quickly and effectively.

Pupils report that they feel safe and well supported. They trust staff to deal with concerns. This includes any unkind behaviour or bullying, which pupils state is very rare. Positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin a culture of care, where pupils' needs are known and met, including through appropriate adjustments for those with SEND. Overall, classrooms are purposeful places that allow pupils to engage successfully with their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching well. Their decisions have brought clear improvements since the previous inspection. Leaders have constructed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that enables pupils to build knowledge over time. Subjects are sequenced logically, with key vocabulary mapped deliberately, so pupils can deepen both their specific and conceptual understanding over time. Teachers typically follow the curriculum as it is set out, using routines, prompts and modelling to support pupils' access to learning.

Leaders make sure that teachers have the subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum. Scaffolds, models and vocabulary instruction are generally used consistently, which help pupils to learn securely. However, despite using these approaches, at times teachers move learning on before ensuring that pupils' understanding is secure. This creates gaps in learning for a small number of pupils, particularly in the basics of transcription, grammar and essential vocabulary.

Pupils learn to read through well-taught phonics, accurate checks on their learning and targeted grouping. Effective checks on learning typically inform regular revisit and retrieval sessions that help pupils to consolidate their learning.

Staff adapt teaching and make reasonable adjustments where needed. Overall, most pupils learn the curriculum securely and gain the knowledge that they need for their next steps.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have set a clear intent for a purposeful, language-rich early years environment. From the start of the Nursery Year, a focus on communication and early vocabulary underpins the curriculum and shapes daily practice. The curriculum is well organised and supports progression, placing communication and language at the heart of children's development.

Staff model language effectively. They rephrase children's ideas and use interactions to extend conversations. This helps children to build confidence in their language development. Learning activities are closely matched to children's stages of development. Indoor and outdoor areas encourage imaginative and purposeful play, and open questions prompt deeper thinking. Children sustain involvement in activities and show growing independence. Although a small number of children are still developing the knowledge and skills expected for their age, most make secure progress from typically low starting points. Staff identify additional needs early and adapt provision so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities can progress well.

Reading is a priority. Children begin learning phonics quickly. Staff's checks on children's learning ensure that teaching develops their language effectively. Storytelling, visuals and consistent modelling enrich early reading.

Positive partnerships with parents and carers strengthen children's learning. Families receive helpful guidance on early reading and ways to support learning at home. Overall, the school ensures that most children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs with precision. They place inclusive practice at the heart of the school's work. Leaders respond quickly and effectively when pupils require additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and pupils facing disadvantage. The use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is precisely matched to pupils' needs, and its impact is evident in the improved engagement and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.

Through purposeful processes, such as progress reviews and detailed pupil analysis, leaders build a clear understanding of each pupil's strengths and barriers to their education. Leaders ensure that targeted support, including sensory regulation activities, personalised provision and structured communication approaches, is tightly matched to pupils' needs so that they can fully take part in learning. They remove barriers effectively through reasonable adjustments and timely specialist input. This includes the appropriate use of alternative provision.

Staff receive training that equips them well to ensure that pupils get the right support at the right time. Teachers direct additional support that strengthens pupils' understanding and access to the curriculum. Leaders work collaboratively with families and external partners to improve outcomes for pupils. They draw on evidence-informed practice to maximise its impact. Rigorous monitoring enables leaders to adapt provision swiftly. Pupils with SEND benefit from well-judged adaptations in classrooms, for example, where staff use visual supports effectively to strengthen pupils' understanding.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders' monitoring gives them an accurate view of priorities, safeguarding and overall practice. They act in pupils' best interests and adapt provision for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to children's social care. Staff training reflects these priorities. Professional learning is evidence informed, sustained and closely matched to pupils' needs. For example, training in speech and language, emotional regulation support and phonics. Teachers new to the profession and trainees benefit from protected time and purposeful coaching. Teaching assistants receive dedicated training time suitable to their roles. This means that pupils benefit from staff's knowledge.

Leaders manage staff's wellbeing and workload carefully. Staff report positive aspects, such as shared, reasonable deadlines, open communication and flexibility for planning and preparation time. They value access to mental health first aiders and optional wellbeing activities. These approaches contribute to a positive working culture where staff feel welcomed and part of a cohesive team.

Governors meet their statutory duties, for instance, by maintaining oversight of safeguarding and resource management. They complete required training and ensure that safeguarding

systems, record-keeping and recruitment processes are robust. Governors' oversight and assurance processes are, in the main, well established and effective. However, there are occasions when their assurance regarding some elements of the school's work is less secure.

Leaders' partnerships with families are productive. Curriculum sessions, reading workshops and community events build trust and reduce barriers for families. Together, these features demonstrate leadership that is focused on pupils' welfare, learning and wider development.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils engage positively with school life and speak confidently about their experiences. They show enthusiasm for the opportunities that the school provides. Pupils reflect on their achievements and demonstrate respect for different beliefs, cultures and values, showing keen moral awareness. They draw on what they learn to discuss fairness and ethical decisions. Pupils cooperate well, value friendships and trust adults to help them if they have any worries.

Leadership roles, such as school council members, eco representatives and curriculum ambassadors, enable pupils to contribute positively to the school community. Pupils access a broad range of cultural, creative and community experiences, including trips, clubs and visits from professionals, helping them to develop understanding of the wider world.

The personal development programme is appropriate and helps pupils to learn about appropriate behaviours, personal safety and online risks. Pupils articulate how to stay safe online and know who to approach with concerns. They develop age-appropriate awareness of issues, such as crime, puberty and healthy lifestyles. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive effective support and adapt provision sensitively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so they benefit fully from the programme.

Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Leaders promote a supportive culture and work closely with families, including offering help where needed, to further develop pupils' wellbeing. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards tolerance and fairness. However, their understanding of fundamental British values and different forms of discrimination is inconsistent. While they treat one another with respect and show no acceptance of discriminatory behaviour, some pupils' understanding of equality and diversity is superficial. Leaders recognise this variation and continue to refine approaches to strengthen pupils' age-appropriate understanding. As a result, pupils develop confidence, character and social awareness. This helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their education and participation in modern Britain.

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

Pupils are embraced in the warm, welcoming atmosphere that helps them to feel safe and valued. Pupils welcome visitors proudly with confidence and charisma. Attendance is regular. This supports friendships and participation in school life. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards each other.

Behaviour is orderly, and pupils show positive attitudes to learning. The presence of the school dog, Teddy Cheung, further strengthens the nurturing environment by offering a comforting and positive influence on pupils' wellbeing.

Pupils enjoy learning. Many can talk articulately about what they have learned. The curriculum is broad and carefully ordered. It is typically delivered well. This helps pupils to know more and remember more over time. Academic outcomes in national tests are secure overall. From low starting points, most pupils achieve well. Staff identify pupils who may be at risk of not progressing as well as they intend and provide appropriate support.

Leaders work with determination to remove barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known or previously known to children's social care are monitored closely. They are fully included in school life and receive appropriate support that helps them to progress. Practical assistance for families and thoughtful pastoral support also help to reduce barriers and raise pupils' aspirations.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered approach to learning beyond the academic curriculum. They gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy lifestyles, relationships and people's different beliefs. This supports their preparation for life in modern Britain. Leadership roles, charity work and community activities help pupils understand how to contribute positively to school life and to the wider community. The 'Brownlow bucket list' broadens pupils' experiences and inspires them. The Year 6 residential trip helps pupils to develop confidence, independence and resilience. Pupils know that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.

Next steps

- Leaders should refine how well staff check pupils' transcription and vocabulary knowledge, helping to ensure that all pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, secure these foundational skills as well as they can.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of the fundamental British values and the different ways that discrimination can occur.
 - Governors should further strengthen their assurance practices in specific aspects of the school's development work so that their oversight, support and challenge are consistently robust across all areas.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Chris Kehoe.

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 HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority as well as members of the governing board, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Julie Cheung

Lead inspector:

Sheena Clark, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jonny Foster-Carr, Ofsted Inspector

Ruth Baldwin, His Majesty's 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

232

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

266

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

34.95%

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

2.59%

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

20.26%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	75%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	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)	63%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	38%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40%	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	61%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	46%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	55%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	62%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	46%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	45%	68%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	69%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	67%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 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	61%	80%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	46%	81%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	78%	-18 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	55%	78%	-23 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	78%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 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%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	46%	81%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	79%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	79%	-19 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)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	15.0%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.1%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright