

Cherry Tree Primary School

Address: Highfield Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 0NS

Unique reference number (URN): 105187

Inspection report: 24 March 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

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have designed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have organised the knowledge that pupils will learn into a sensible order so that pupils build up their knowledge over time. Staff teach new vocabulary effectively across subjects. Reading is a priority. Pupils who struggle with reading receive effective support to help them to catch up.

Leaders provide training that helps teachers to improve their practice. Teachers, typically, have a secure knowledge of the subjects and year groups that they teach. For example, teachers receive helpful training to improve their teaching of mathematics. They explain new ideas clearly. Teachers ask questions to help them check what pupils know. This often helps teachers to spot misunderstandings quickly. Teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have renewed their approach to teaching the skills that support high-quality writing. Teachers are now generally helping pupils to spell more accurately. They help younger pupils to write fluently. However, teachers do not consistently address errors in older pupils' handwriting. Leaders are working to make sure that this improves across all year groups.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious early years curriculum. They have sequenced it with precision so that children build knowledge step by step. When children join the school in the Reception year, staff make careful checks to find out what children know and can do. This helps staff to plan activities that build on what children already know. Children quickly develop curiosity, enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning.

Staff prioritise reading from the start. Children learn the sounds that they need to read words accurately. They practise using books matched to the sounds they are learning. Children who fall behind receive timely support so that they can catch up quickly. As a result, most children read accurately and fluently by the time they leave Reception.

Adults and children interact with warmth and purpose. Adults ask children thoughtful questions and listen carefully to their answers. This draws children into rich conversations. Adults model new words and use stories, songs and rhymes to help children develop their vocabulary. As a result, children develop confidence and fluency in their language throughout the day.

Leaders work closely with parents and carers. This helps to make sure that learning continues beyond the school day. Adults identify the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities promptly. Adults with relevant expertise make regular visits to support the early years team. Children have access to a stimulating and well-resourced learning environment. This gives them the chance to explore and discover independently.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. This begins from the moment pupils start at the school. Leaders use a range of approaches to help them identify pupils' emerging needs promptly. Pastoral workers check in with pupils each morning. This makes sure that any temporary difficulties that pupils may be facing can be ironed out quickly. Leaders maintain high expectations of pupils with SEND. Pupils follow the core curriculum alongside their peers. Teachers adapt activities and resources. This means pupils revisit and build on prior knowledge regularly.

Leaders make thoughtful use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Pastoral workers support pupils who are disadvantaged or known to social care. This is beginning to help them to attend school more often. Leaders have also provided training to help staff support pupils with SEND to understand and manage their feelings. This means pupils get the help they need to learn alongside their friends.

Leaders check the progress of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils carefully. This helps them to spot any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders work closely with families and with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the support they need. As a result, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils make suitable progress from their starting points. They speak positively about the support they receive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate and shared view of the school's strengths and areas for development. This has helped them to prioritise improvements to the curriculum and to teaching. These improvements are beginning to benefit pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Leaders introduce new initiatives carefully. They consider the wellbeing and workload of staff when planning changes. This means staff are not overwhelmed when new approaches are introduced. Leaders provide purposeful, subject-specific training for staff. This helps teachers to improve their practice and deliver the curriculum well.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They have a clear understanding of the school's context and priorities. Governors take their statutory responsibilities seriously. They track attendance, safeguarding and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This helps governors to check that leaders are doing what they should.

Staff feel valued, listened to and supported. They are proud to work at the school. On the whole, parents and carers recognise and welcome the improvements that leaders have made. For example, parents appreciate the pastoral support that pupils receive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils show genuine respect for others and a deep curiosity about the world beyond their own experience. Visits to local places of worship help pupils to develop a thoughtful understanding of different faiths. As a result, pupils develop a deep respect for the beliefs of

others. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to take on leadership roles across the school, including as school councillors and playground leaders. This helps them to understand their responsibility to their community. Pupils learn about fundamental British values through the curriculum and through assemblies. They discuss democracy and the rule of law with confidence, drawing on examples from their own lives. This prepares them well for life beyond school.

Leaders have designed a coherent personal, social, health and economic education programme. They match it carefully to pupils' experiences and their community context. Pupils learn how to avoid dangerous situations that they may face in their lives. This helps them to make safe choices in their community. Pupils develop detailed and applied knowledge of online safety. They benefit from relationships and health education that is suited to their age and stage. This complies with statutory guidance. Pupils who need additional support for their wellbeing receive it promptly. This helps pupils to feel settled and ready to learn.

Pupils enjoy singing in the school choir and representing the school in the football team. They also collect donations for the local homeless shelter. Leaders make sure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, take part in all that the school offers. Pupils share their ambitions for the future with confidence. Leaders plan transition to secondary school thoroughly and with purpose. These opportunities help pupils to develop the confidence that they need for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Some pupils are not as well prepared for their next stage of education as they could be. Results in national tests, over time, show that too few pupils reach the level expected for their age. This is the case in reading, writing and mathematics. Some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The changes that leaders have made to the curriculum are beginning to benefit pupils. Many pupils achieve well in the Year 4 multiplication tables check. Younger pupils are able to write fluently and spell correctly. Many pupils read accurately. Older pupils spell accurately. However, errors in some older pupils' handwriting mean they cannot consistently show what they know in their writing.

Pupils develop knowledge well across subjects. Generally, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make suitable progress from their starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Too many pupils do not attend school as regularly as they could. Leaders work closely with families. This helps leaders to understand the challenges that some families face. Leaders work with external professionals to design support for pupils who find it the hardest to

attend. Some pupils who previously struggled to attend school regularly are now able to attend more often. However, leaders' actions to improve attendance are at an early stage. Some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), miss out on important learning.

Leaders have adopted clear and consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff implement the school's person-centred approach consistently. Pupils who need extra support with their behaviour receive it quickly. Staff help pupils with SEND to understand and meet the school's expectations. Suspensions have reduced. This means that, generally, classrooms are calm and focused places to learn. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and proud to be members of their school. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour is rare and not tolerated. When concerns arise, staff deal with them effectively.

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

Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. Staff know pupils well and greet them warmly each day. Pupils have many opportunities to talk about their feelings and experiences with staff. This helps pupils to feel settled and ready to learn. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a concern. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities value the support they receive. They speak positively about the care and help that staff provide.

Pupils enjoy coming to school to see their friends and to learn. Pupils are polite and respectful towards one another. They behave well around the school and try hard in lessons. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour are rare and not tolerated.

Some pupils are not as well prepared for their next stage of education as they could be. Some older pupils have gaps in their handwriting skills that prevent them from showing what they know in writing. Some pupils also do not attend school as regularly as they could. This means they miss out on important learning.

Children get a positive start to their education in the early years. From their first days in school, adults help children to talk, listen and read. This helps children to grow in confidence. Many pupils read accurately. Younger pupils are beginning to write fluently and spell correctly.

Pupils are proud to be members of their school and their community. They enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including clubs and community activities. Leaders make sure that no pupil misses out. These opportunities help pupils to develop the confidence that they need for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that teachers rectify gaps in older pupils' writing skills so that pupils can communicate their knowledge effectively in writing.

- Leaders should make sure that their work with families improves the attendance of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Orchards Federation, which means other people in the federation also have responsibility for running the school. The federation is run by the executive headteacher, Katie Hague, and overseen by a federated governing body, chaired by Holly Bonfield.

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 executive headteacher, headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing board. Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys and responses to Ofsted Parent View.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

A new executive headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Mary Fraser

Lead inspector:

Mark Hazzard, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian Young, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Valmai Roberts, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

406

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

420

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)

51.97%

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

4.19%

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

19.95%

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	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	44%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	63%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	53%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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 (revised)	47%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	54%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	47%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	49%	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	34%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	30%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	26%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	42%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49%	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	46%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	39%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	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	34%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	30%	69%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	67%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	26%	66%	-41 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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	81%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	80%	-12 pp
2022/23 (final)	49%	78%	-30 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	46%	78%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	78%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	77%	-31 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	39%	80%	-41 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	79%	-48 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)	7.8%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	5.9%	Above

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)	27.3%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	29.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.5%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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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