

St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Over Hulton

Address: Crescent Avenue, Over Hulton, Bolton, Lancashire, BL5 1EN

Unique reference number (URN): 105236

Inspection report: 24 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders know pupils well and promote high expectations for attendance and behaviour. Attendance remains a strength, with whole-school attendance above national figures. Leaders act quickly and effectively where attendance is low. For example, the attendance of pupils who are on attendance contracts is improving. However, leaders do not consistently analyse patterns for groups or track trends over time. This limits their strategic planning and understanding for some pupils.

Behaviour across the school is positive. Pupils conduct themselves calmly, move sensibly around school and describe feeling safe and supported. They show respect for staff and peers and understand how positive behaviour helps their learning. Pupils are confident that concerns, including bullying or discrimination, are dealt with promptly. In lessons, pupils settle quickly and show positive attitudes to learning. Staff apply expectations with reasonable consistency, although the new behaviour policy is not yet fully embedded. Where needed, staff make appropriate adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them to regulate their behaviour and be able to take part in lessons. Strong relationships and pupils' mature attitudes contribute positively to the school's environment, although leaders' limited analysis of behaviour information restricts their ability to evaluate impact precisely.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a broad and increasingly coherent programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils talk confidently about the school's values of 'hope, love, faithfulness, peace and confidence'. They give clear examples of how these guide their behaviour, relationships and decision making. Pupils show respect for people from different backgrounds, beliefs and family structures and speak positively about learning how to treat others with kindness and fairness. Through the 'Ethos Council', pupils experience democracy in action, voting on ideas and representing their classmates. This strengthens their understanding of responsibility and how communities work.

The programme for personal, social and health education, including relationships and sex education and health education, is age-appropriate and taught weekly. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, growing up, managing feelings and staying safe. Leaders enhance this through workshops, visitors and specific wellbeing resources, which give pupils a shared emotional vocabulary to improve their confidence. Pupils learn about different families, cultures and beliefs. They understand the principles that underpin life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including clubs, music tuition, cultural projects and sports, which help them develop confidence and resilience.

Enrichment to promote pupils' interests and talents is a strength. Pupils benefit from a wide range of cultural, creative and physical opportunities, including music performances, 'Spirited Arts Week', heritage projects, fencing, boccia, cross country and jujutsu. Leaders track participation to ensure disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language have equal access. Pupil leadership roles, such as playground leaders, reading buddies and 'salad

servers', help pupils develop confidence, teamwork and character. Community events and church links deepen pupils' sense of belonging and social responsibility. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement is too variable across the school, reflecting weaknesses in knowledge of the basics of reading and writing for younger pupils. This is exacerbated through inconsistent curriculum implementation. Pupils' books show stronger outcomes in upper key stage 2, where clearer expectations help pupils to develop secure handwriting, greater fluency and improved stamina across their writing. This is demonstrated in the positive published outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, this is not typical across the school.

In the early years and key stage 1, gaps in early phonics, the blending of sounds, letter formation and transcription skills slow pupils' progress from their starting points and limit the quality of their written work. These weaknesses affect significant groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language, who do not achieve consistently well across the curriculum. In several subjects, pupils struggle to recall prior learning securely, showing that knowledge is not built or retained over time. While leaders' recent work is beginning to strengthen expectations, the overall impact on attainment and progress is not yet secure enough to ensure pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders are developing the curriculum, but its design and implementation are not yet consistently effective across the school. In writing, leaders sequence learning clearly and match tasks closely to intended outcomes. As a result, pupils' work shows early improvement. However, this stronger practice is not typical across subjects or year groups. In some wider subjects, such as art and design, leaders do not set out clearly enough how knowledge builds over time. Furthermore, staff have not received the subject-specific training needed to teach the curriculum well.

Teaching quality varies. Some teachers use their effective subject knowledge to explain new ideas clearly and check understanding well, but this is not consistent. In the early years and key stage 1, gaps in pupils' knowledge of early reading, phonics, handwriting, vocabulary and blending of sounds are not addressed reliably. This limits pupils' ability to build secure understanding. Assessment systems remain underdeveloped, so teachers do not identify or act on gaps in learning quickly enough. Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are evident in some lessons, but not routinely, meaning some pupils cannot access learning fully.

Overall, leaders have begun to take steps to strengthen the curriculum and teaching quality across school. However, these improvements are at an early stage, which limits the impact

that can be seen for pupils.

Early years

Needs attention 

The quality of provision is too inconsistent to ensure children develop the early skills they need to succeed. The curriculum is not fully developed. As a result, daily activities do not link to what children are meant to learn. Staff do not consistently model the precise language, vocabulary and early literacy skills that help children to learn well.

Although reading is prioritised, phonics is not taught or applied with enough rigour. Several children struggle to blend sounds. Opportunities to practise phonics in the provision are limited, and misconceptions in letter formation and pencil grip often go uncorrected. Staff do not always match reading texts accurately to children's reading ability.

The indoor and outdoor learning environments do not support high-quality learning. Staff do not use activities to build children's language, especially outdoor activities. Weaknesses mean that children do not benefit from a confident and secure start to school life. Children are not prepared well enough for the demands of Year 1.

Children in the early years benefit from warm relationships and calm routines. Links between staff and families make for a positive transition into school. Leadership in the early years is at an early stage of development. Although this is so, leaders understand the key priorities and have begun to address them.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders demonstrate a positive approach to inclusion and rightly prioritise this area. However, it is too early to see the impact of much of this work. Leaders identify the most significant groups for their context, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and children who are looked after. Pupil premium funding and collaboration with the virtual school support individual pupils. New systems, such as clearer support plans and improved tools for identifying need, are beginning to strengthen provision. However, staff confidence and expertise vary widely, so early identification and assessment remain inconsistent across the school.

The school's caring culture helps many pupils feel safe and included. Leaders engage with families, professionals and external agencies more regularly, with many parents and carers noting the positive difference in communication and support for their child in recent months. However, uneven practice and support mean staff do not reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing consistently. Where it works well, staff use helpful adjustments such as visual overlays, concrete resources or changes to the classroom layout. As a result, some pupils learn alongside their peers and achieve well. However, this support remains inconsistent and leaders do not monitor the impact of strategies well enough to assure themselves that pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders do not have robust systems in place for monitoring and tracking key aspects of the school's work. This limits leaders' ability to evaluate whether actions are working or ensure that support is targeted where it is most needed. For example, information about the impact of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is collected, but it is not analysed in enough depth to identify patterns or trends. This hinders the effectiveness of the school improvement journey to ensure support is provided as timely as it needs to be.

The school is developing positively under new leadership. Their visibility, clear communication and relational approach are widely valued by staff, pupils, parents and carers. They have established a calm, purposeful ethos and are beginning to make a difference, particularly in curriculum development, wellbeing and community engagement. Leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and have begun to take effective action. Staff feel respected and well led. Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing. Professional learning is developing, including support for early career teachers, although training is not yet consistently having the impact it should.

Governors are committed and supportive, meeting their statutory duties and beginning to offer greater challenge. However, they do not yet hold leaders fully to account for the impact of improvement work.

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

Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment where they feel safe and ready to learn. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff and feel comfortable seeking help if they are worried. Pupils attend well, and most arrive punctually and settle quickly to their lessons. In subjects where examinations take place at the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve well. They take pride in their work and are keen to share what they know. Pupils benefit from rich opportunities, such as music performances, heritage projects and sporting events, which deepen their knowledge and broaden their experiences. However, pupils' academic experiences are not yet consistent across the school.

Weaknesses remain in the early years and key stage 1, where phonics, blending of sounds, early writing and vocabulary development are still in the early stages of implementation. As a result, some pupils do not secure the essential skills they need to be ready for the next stage of learning. Inconsistent approaches to delivering the curriculum, including in the early years, combined with limited checking of how well pupils learn, lead to gaps in knowledge that go unaddressed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils do not consistently have their needs identified or receive support that matches their needs closely enough. Leaders accurately identify strengths and improvement priorities, but they do not track this progress with enough rigour. This means they cannot show the impact of much of the work that is underway to rectify the weaknesses that exist.

Relationships are warm and respectful, reflecting the school's vision of 'growing in faith, hope and love'. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site, showing kindness and consideration towards others. They understand what bullying is, and adults act promptly

and appropriately when concerns arise. Pupils feel part of a close community, where the 'Ethos Council' works with local residents and parishioners in shared events. These experiences help pupils to feel valued and connected.

Next steps

- Leaders must strengthen the identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They should ensure that adaptations and targeted support are implemented consistently so that pupils' needs are met promptly and they can access learning successfully.
 - Leaders must secure a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading, writing and knowledge of the basics across early years and key stage 1 so that pupils build the essential knowledge and fluency needed to achieve well over time.
 - Leaders must strengthen the accuracy and use of assessment so that gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified quickly and addressed before they widen.
 - Leaders must ensure the indoor and outdoor learning environments in the early years are purposeful and language-rich so that activities consistently promote high-quality learning and support children's development of communication and early literacy.
 - Leaders must establish robust systems for monitoring the actions on their school improvement plan so that leaders and governors can evaluate the impact accurately and drive sustained improvement.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Revd Vincent Whitworth.

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 school leaders, staff and members of the governing body during the inspection. They also spoke with members of the local authority and diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character was in June 2024.

The school does not make current use of any alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. There is a new headteacher and chair of governors in post, who were both appointed to their roles in September 2025.

Lead inspector:

Sue Dymond, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Steven Rooney, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Ward, 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 February 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

203

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

218

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)

10.34%

Below 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

1.48%

Below 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

9.36%

Below 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	82%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	94%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	93%	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	85%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	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	90%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	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	60%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	50%	46%	Close to average
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	60%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
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	60%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
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	70%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
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	60%	68%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	67%	-17 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 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	60%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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 (2 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.0%	5.9%	Below

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)	10.8%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	16.2%	Below

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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