

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Address: Alexandra Street, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 9JT

Unique reference number (URN): 105239

Inspection report: 9 December 2025

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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders analyse absence information carefully. Their close work with families and external agencies helps many pupils to overcome barriers to attending school. Leaders provide a walking bus, breakfast and 'soft starts' to help pupils arrive on time and be settled for the start of the school day. Some pupils miss chunks of their schooling due to absence. Leaders are tireless in ensuring that these pupils are safe and supported to attend more regularly. This has improved attendance for some persistently absent pupils, and this continues to be a focus of the school's work.

Pupils benefit from a calm and supportive learning environment. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff and other pupils. Fortnightly focus areas for behaviour are well understood by staff and pupils alike. Bullying and discrimination are not accepted. Any incidents are dealt with swiftly and in line with school policy. Pupils trust adults in school to help them with any worries that they may have.

As pupils walk down 'Progress Avenue' and 'Creative Close' they are encouraged to believe in themselves and to try their best. Pupils who sometimes struggle with their behaviour are gently reminded about these expectations. They are provided with appropriate additional guidance and help where necessary. As a result, pupils are well supported to develop positive attitudes to their learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a deep understanding of the school's context and the disadvantages that pupils may face. A robust culture of early assessment empowers staff to understand pupils' individual needs swiftly and accurately. Staff demonstrate an expert understanding of the barriers faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. They work systematically to successfully remove these barriers.

Pupils' social and emotional needs are considered alongside academic support. Close collaboration with social workers, the virtual school and speech therapists helps to shape support for pupils. The 'Sparkle Room' provides bespoke pathways matched to individual needs. Pupils experience a tangible sense of belonging and importance. They know that they are heard and valued.

There is a relentless commitment by leaders to enhance the experiences and opportunities provided to all pupils. Staff ensure that any barriers that pupils face do not prevent them from participating fully in school life. Leaders are responsive to changes in the needs of pupils. They have ensured that staff are trained to provide effective support to the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The use of additional funding is rigorously checked. Any necessary refinements are made swiftly. Leaders have recently made changes to the information gathered about pupils'

progress to further focus their work on ensuring that the gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils is closing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders have a resolute focus on providing an extensive personal development programme. Deliberate thought is given to removing any barriers for pupils. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from the school's remarkable offer.

Pupils develop confidence and are supported to flourish as a result of highly effective support for their wellbeing. Staff are skilful in guiding and empowering pupils to speak about their emotions, thoughts and feelings. Children in the early years are taught the language of emotions and cooperation. Pupils are supported to 'keep trying' and 'bounce back' when they find things difficult. Staff are adept at being responsive and proactive in their support for pupils. This equips pupils with the skills that they need to flourish.

The school's personal, social and health education programme is deftly tailored to the school's context. This is rooted in preparing pupils for life beyond school. Pupils learn about what makes a healthy relationship and the changes that will happen to them as they grow up. Leaders work with police community support officers and other agencies to teach pupils about risks and dangers. Pupils learn how to make informed, safe decisions, for example when online, when travelling by bike and around dog safety.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy and rule of law. They relish learning about different countries, faiths and families. Pupils utilise this knowledge to demonstrate an impressive understanding of equality. They fully respect differences between themselves and others. Pupils demonstrate high levels of tolerance and respect. This prepares them extremely well for life in modern Britain.

Older pupils are diligent leaders, wearing their 'team' sweatshirts with pride. They know that their leadership roles make a difference. For example, 'shades' ambassadors promote tolerance and respect for all, while 'shine', 'sparkle' and 'learn' leaders remind their peers of ways to respect and contribute to their community and the world. This includes activities such as litter picking and singing in local theatres and supermarkets.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. This is largely reflected in the published data over time. In 2025, pupils' attainment in mathematics, by the end of Year 6, was lower than in previous years, but typically, pupils' gains in this subject are close to the national average. Additionally, while attainment for pupils who are disadvantaged was close to national averages, the gaps in attainment when compared with other disadvantaged pupils nationally have widened over time. Leaders have been swift to prioritise these areas. Changes made to the teaching of mathematics and how disadvantaged pupils' gaps in learning are identified and addressed are bearing fruit.

Pupils confidently recall their learning across the curriculum, for example understanding cavities and decay in teeth and how these are caused. They confidently explain their developing sketching and drawing techniques.

In the early years, children are supported to develop suitable pencil grips and secure the early reading and number skills that they require for Year 1. This is successfully built on in key stage 1. Pupils are supported to progress well through the curriculum from their starting points. Typically, pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive and ambitious curriculum offer. The school has ensured that subjects are taught in an order that supports pupils to build their learning over time. Leaders accurately identify and address aspects of the curriculum that need to be further developed. For example, they recently made changes to the mathematics curriculum to further support pupils' fluency and achievement in this subject.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills that pupils must learn from the start of their education. Language and communication skills and the teaching of reading sit at the heart of the school's curriculum. Well-matched phonics teaching helps pupils to secure skills in early reading. A focus on accurate letter formation and spelling helps pupils to apply these skills appropriately. Where pupils require additional support to secure their learning, appropriate interventions are used to help them to overcome barriers to their learning.

Leaders provide staff with appropriate training to develop the subject expertise that they need. Staff make suitable adaptations to learning. These support pupils' individual needs well. Typically, teachers model and design learning effectively. However, at times, teachers' checks on learning do not identify errors or misconceptions in pupils' understanding consistently well. This can slow pupils' progression through the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

The school ensures that children are supported to make a positive start to their schooling. Leaders are proactive in securing strong partnership working with parents and carers and previous settings before children enter the Reception Year. This ensures that children who require additional support benefit from well-matched, tailored support as soon as they join the school.

The school has designed the early years curriculum with a clear focus on preparing children for key stage 1 and beyond. Central to this work is the development of children's vocabulary and communication skills. Children benefit from high-quality interactions with adults. Staff model language carefully. They support children to develop their listening and social skills. Children are taught to share and interact positively with each other. Routines are clear and consistent. This helps children to settle quickly and to build their independence.

Staff ensure that the teaching of phonics and the physical skills required for writing are prioritised to secure the knowledge that children need to become readers and writers. Children are provided with opportunities to practise and apply this learning across the

provision. By the end of their time in the early years, many children are ready for continuing their learning in Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations. The school's inclusive approach is particularly effective. Leaders are knowledgeable about the community that they serve. They act in the best interest of pupils, including those pupils who are disadvantaged. Leaders have responded to the changing needs and barriers to pupils' learning. Well-thought-through approaches are employed to overcoming these. For example, targeted interventions to support pupils' increasing speech, language and communication needs are provided from the start of pupils' time at the school.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ensure that appropriate improvement priorities are in place to further develop the offer provided. For example, recently, they made effective changes to the mathematics curriculum to further strengthen this aspect of the school's work.

Staff are committed to their roles. They are proud to work at the school and positive about the training and support that they receive. They value the priority given to their workload and wellbeing. Parents and carers are equally positive about the opportunities that they have to share in pupils' learning at the school.

Governors have the knowledge to be able to perform their statutory functions. They understand their role and keep a close eye on the school's strategic direction. They demonstrate openness in how to continue to improve some aspects of the school's work, such as attainment for disadvantaged pupils. However, governors are less well informed about some other aspects of the school's current improvement priorities, for example the development of the curriculum and its impact on pupils. This limits their ability to challenge and support the school in these areas effectively.

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

This is a school where everyone matters. Staff and pupils greet each other with friendly smiles each day. Staff skilfully support any pupils who find it difficult to express their emotions in a mature and sensible way. Unkind words or behaviour, including bullying, are rare. When they do occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and cared for.

Throughout their time at the school, pupils are encouraged to 'Learn, Sparkle and Shine'. Leaders have created a culture where pupils know it is important to work hard and to behave well. Pupils take great pride in doing so. This is reflected in their positive attitudes to learning. Staff understand the barriers and challenges that some pupils face in their learning and attendance. They provide the support pupils need to succeed. Pupils are delighted to receive 'super learner' certificates and merits in recognition of their endeavours. Most pupils achieve well across the different subjects. They are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of opportunities beyond the academic. Leaders ensure that all pupils are provided with opportunities to build their confidence and self-esteem. This is evident in the gusto demonstrated by pupils in their carol rehearsals and in children's pride in their school performances. Pupils are excited to discover new skills and talents. They enjoy playing the ukulele and compiling art portfolios. Pupils speak animatedly about representing their school in singing and sports events.

Visits to theatres and museums help pupils to make sense of the world around them. These experiences support pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils contribute to making the school the best it can be. Older pupils are diligent role models for younger children. They provide keen support with reading and craft activities.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' learning identify errors and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and skills consistently well so that these can be addressed swiftly.
 - Governors should deepen their understanding of the impact of the school's curriculum priorities so that they are well placed to support and challenge leaders' actions to develop the curriculum, teaching and pupils' achievement.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Paul Masters.

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 and other school leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school is voluntary aided and is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2024.

The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision provider.

Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The headteacher was previously the school's deputy headteacher.

Lead inspector:

Rebecca Jewitt, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Andy Cunningham, His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Howard, Ofsted Inspector

Gaynor 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 9 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

422

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)

33.65%

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

4.03%

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

11.85%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	71%	Close to average

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	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	53%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	43%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	52%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	44%	Above

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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	60%	Above

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	66%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	58%	Above

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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	59%	Above

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	53%	68%	-14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	43%	69%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	67%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	66%	-1 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	70%	80%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	78%	-5 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	66%	78%	-12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	81%	77%	3 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	65%	79%	-14 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	81%	79%	2 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)	4.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	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)	10.1%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	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.

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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