

The Elton High School

Address: Walshaw Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 1RN

Unique reference number (URN): 105354

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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Typically, pupils make secure progress through the curriculum as they move through year groups. They benefit from a structure that enables them to build knowledge progressively and apply it in their work with increasing confidence.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, currently achieve in line with national averages. Leaders have ensured that recent staff training about effective methods for checking understanding is used to identify and close gaps in pupils' learning.

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps at post-16, supported by a careers programme that is increasingly coherent and responsive to their needs. Pupils receive appropriate support to understand the wide range of pathways into education, employment or training. A wide range of local partnerships further strengthens pupils' readiness for transition.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have secured overall attendance that is in line with national figures. However, leaders' analysis shows that attendance for older pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, remains noticeably lower. Leaders have expanded the attendance team and put in place systems such as regular review meetings, closer coordination between pastoral and academic teams and improved use of attendance data. Support for pupils who face challenges to attending well is beginning to have an impact. There are some clear improvements following the removal of individual barriers. While governors provide challenge to leaders around pupils' attendance and behaviour, governors' support varies in its impact. Leaders are beginning to secure sustained improvement across all groups of pupils.

Behaviour across the school is calm, orderly and respectful, with pupils conducting themselves well in all areas and demonstrating elements of positive self-discipline. Staff know pupils well and contribute to a caring, supportive environment. In lessons, pupils are generally focused. Leaders respond promptly and consistently to any concerns about behaviour, bullying or harassment, ensuring that any rare issues are addressed quickly. Staff understand and apply behaviour policies appropriately, supporting a positive climate for learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They are clear about the actions needed to continue improving. The curriculum is designed to give pupils the most important knowledge they need for their next steps. Leaders have thought carefully about the sequencing of the curriculum, and in most subjects, this helps pupils to build knowledge in logical steps.

Teachers' subject knowledge is comprehensive. Leaders ensure staff have access to training that supports confident curriculum delivery. This is evident, for example, in science,

where sharing of good practice has increased the consistency of high-quality teaching. In geography, clear routines and a structured curriculum support consistently effective teaching. However, in some subjects, some aspects of the curriculum are not delivered as consistently well as leaders intend, which leads to variation in pupils' experiences.

Leaders prioritise reading, with targeted teaching in place for pupils who need to catch up, including children known to social care and the weakest readers. Staff understand how to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. Teachers typically make appropriate adjustments to help pupils to learn successfully. Leaders have recognised the need to review support for pupils who face barriers to learning. For example, they have identified pupils who require help with handwriting and have introduced a programme to support them.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an increasingly inclusive culture where pupils' individual needs are understood and responded to with care. Identification systems for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known to children's social care are broadly secure. Leaders are refining processes to strengthen accuracy and consistency of identification of needs and support. Leaders use careful evaluations to track pupils' progress and review the impact of any extra support that is provided to pupils. Staff speak positively about recent training to support them to adapt their teaching and check pupils' understanding. This has strengthened their classroom practice and increased their confidence in adapting learning.

Leaders reduce barriers to learning through targeted support for pupils. For example, they use their learning hub to creatively support pupils to reintegrate into school following absence, suspension or other barriers to school. Staff tailor the support that pupils need to create a climate for success. The strategy to make impactful use of additional funding aligns closely to whole-school improvement priorities, ensuring a clear focus on disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders sustain positive relationships with families and work productively with external agencies, including local virtual schools, to ensure that pupils known to social care receive timely, well-coordinated support. Leaders use alternative provision appropriately and closely check that pupils receive the support that they need.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. This is evident in the curriculum changes leaders have already implemented. Leaders draw on their understanding of the school's context to make decisions that best support pupils.

Leaders, including governors, are well known within the school community and carefully take account of the views of parents and carers. Parents feel confident that they can share feedback and that it will be acted upon.

Leaders prioritise staff's workload and wellbeing, giving careful consideration to these when making decisions. They model a caring, supportive and approachable culture, which staff

describe as a notable strength of the school. Leaders prioritise professional learning. They ensure that staff, including teachers at the start of their careers, benefit from well-structured training that supports both individual development and whole-school improvement.

Leaders have recently reviewed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure it remains fit for purpose. As a result, they continue to evaluate how resources are deployed so that pupils receive the right support and that barriers to learning are removed more effectively. This reflects leaders' commitment to ensuring that decisions continue to meet the needs of the pupils.

Governors know the school well and fulfil their duties, including by ensuring that all members of the school community understand the school's vision and values. On occasion, leaders do not review, as well as they could, the impact of their strategies for improvement. This is particularly in relation to attendance and the deployment of resources for pupils who need additional support to remove barriers to learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have strengthened the personal, social and health education curriculum. It is well structured so that pupils revisit key themes and build their knowledge steadily over time. This helps pupils reflect on their beliefs and experiences. Teaching develops pupils' understanding of right and wrong and encourages thoughtful discussion around ethical issues. For example, pupils are able to recall learning about consent with confidence, showing where knowledge is firmly embedded.

Leaders promote pupils' social development through consistent routines and expectations. These support cooperation and respectful conduct. The fundamental British values are taught throughout the curriculum, as well as through wider opportunities. Pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils take advantage of these opportunities as well as they might. Leaders have begun reviewing who attends and who does not so that they can ensure barriers are removed to support pupils to engage with these opportunities. Leaders consider the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. They remove barriers on a case-by-case basis. This has enabled some pupils to take part in activities they previously avoided. Pastoral support is timely and valued by pupils.

The relationships and sex education and health education curriculum is appropriate and responsive to pupils' needs and local context. Teaching is adapted so that pupils receive clear and relevant guidance at the right time, for example on how to stay safe, including online.

The school offers pupils a wide range of careers opportunities that help them to make informed decisions about their future. Pupils benefit from well-planned events, employer encounters and links with external partners, which broaden their understanding of post-16 pathways. A trained central team supports early careers awareness, particularly in Year 7, and pupils value the guidance they receive. Leaders have improved consistency across year groups so all pupils, including pupils facing barriers, can access these opportunities.

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

Pupils describe feeling happy, safe, proud of their school and genuinely valued as members of the community. They are invested in the life of the school and demonstrate this through their positive attitudes and the care they show towards one another and to visitors. The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm, respectful and trusting. Pupils feel listened to and confident that their views matter. They attend regularly and understand how good attendance supports their learning and development.

Pupils achieve in line with national outcomes. The curriculum is well structured and ensures that pupils learn effectively and make secure connections in their learning. Most teachers help pupils to build and deepen their knowledge by checking their understanding and addressing misconceptions effectively. Pupils enjoy their learning and approach lessons with a positive attitude. They make secure progress from their starting points, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Through purposeful opportunities in the wider curriculum, pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to thrive as responsible, respectful citizens. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Bullying is rare and, when concerns do arise, the school's well-established systems ensure that incidents are reported and dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils benefit from a rich range of extra-curricular activities and experiences, including chess, international educational visits to Berlin, Iceland and Miami and opportunities for every pupil to take part in musical experiences. They also experience a wide range of opportunities that help them make informed decisions about their future career pathways. They are fully equipped for their next steps in education and training. Pupils benefit from continually developing support and opportunities that help meet their needs and enable them to learn well.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the consistency of the curriculum and teaching to enhance pupils' learning experiences across all subjects and improve outcomes for all pupils.
 - Leaders and governors should further strengthen their oversight and deepen their evaluation of existing strategies so that actions are more sharply coordinated and lead to sustained and rapid improvement.
 - Leaders should continue to refine how they deploy resources to ensure that all pupils' needs are fully met.
 - Leaders and governors should build on their work to improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that support and interventions are timely and have a sustained impact, particularly for older pupils and specific groups where attendance is a barrier to learning.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors of this school is Iain MacKay.

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 senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a group of governors, including the chair.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision for its pupils.

Headteacher: Jonathan Wilton

Lead inspector:

Elaine Mawson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Victoria Atherton, Ofsted Inspector

Timothy Long, Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Cox, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Rigby, 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

1,025

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,000

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.24%

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: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.78%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.05%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.2%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.3%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.8%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	44.3	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.8	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.0	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.24	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.50	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	16.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	29.4%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.8	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.82	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.72	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	16.7%	53.1%	-36.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	22.9%	53.1%	-30.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	29.4%	52.4%	-23.0 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	34.6	50.4	-15.8
2023/24 (final)	32.4	50.0	-17.7
2022/23 (final)	34.8	50.3	-15.5

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.82	0.16	-0.99
2022/23 (final)	-0.72	0.17	-0.89

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

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)	7.4%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.7%	9.0%	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)	21.1%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.1%	26.5%	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



