

Mills Hill Primary School

Address: Baytree Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL9 0NH

Unique reference number (URN): 105648

Inspection report: 14 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve in line with other pupils nationally. The school's latest results in national tests show that by the end of key stage 2, most pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Year 1 pupils achieve well in the phonics screening check. The secure multiplication knowledge that Year 4 pupils develop supports their further mathematical learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make secure progress from their starting points.

Pupils take pride in their work. Their books demonstrate increasing independence over time. Pupils recall much of their learning across the curriculum. They build a useful body of knowledge as they continue through the school. For example, pupils can articulate the impressionist style of artists and can confidently explain why earthquakes happen. Retaining key learning helps pupils apply this to new concepts.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise attendance. They have put robust systems into place to track attendance and monitor absence closely. As a result, overall attendance is consistently in line with national expectations. Leaders are ambitious for attendance to rise further. Staff greet parents and carers at the gate every morning and know individual families well. This enables staff to understand any concerns and help reduce any potential barriers to attendance.

Behaviour across the school is positive and reflects a calm, respectful culture in which pupils feel safe and well supported. Pupils fulfil staff's high expectations of them. The school's 'conscious discipline' ethos encourages pupils to be accountable and exercise self-discipline. This is evident during less-structured times, when pupils play cooperatively and show caring attitudes towards one another. There are clear reporting systems in place that staff follow closely. Leaders keep accurate records of any rare incidents of serious misbehaviour, including bullying and discrimination. They respond to these sensitively and fairly. Pupils are friendly and courteous, welcoming visitors to their school. In lessons, they are curious and attentive. This includes those who find learning difficult. Pupils remain attentive and stay on task in the classroom, including during more informal parts of lessons such as paired discussions.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the curriculum and how well it is taught. Leaders prioritise the important basic skills in reading, writing, language and mathematics. They have designed ambitious curriculums that are carefully sequenced so that pupils build their learning securely. The importance that leaders place on curriculum quality in subjects other than English and mathematics is a point to be celebrated.

Work to strengthen the writing curriculum is already under way in response to a dip in pupils' achievement in recent years. Typically, writing is taught well and any gaps are addressed swiftly. While some staff demonstrate clear modelling and teaching of writing and spelling,

this is not consistent across all year groups. In a minority of classes, delivery is weaker and this hinders pupils' progress.

The intended curriculum is being implemented in classrooms. Staff have the subject knowledge and expertise needed to deliver it. They design engaging lessons and encourage collaboration amongst pupils. Staff make effective adaptations to their teaching to meet the full range of pupils' abilities, including those with additional needs. Adults check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions as they go. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to revisit and recap learning, helping them to remember important knowledge over time.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that clearly identifies and sequences the key knowledge children will learn. Staff receive relevant training so they have the expertise they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff recognise the importance of using every opportunity to engage children in high-quality interactions that extend their language and vocabulary. They understand how vital this is for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other challenges.

From the outset, staff form warm, positive connections with both children and parents and carers. New families are invited to stay-and-play sessions, ensuring children feel safe, secure and familiar with staff by the time they begin school. Over time, children progress and develop their independence through carefully planned activities. For example, they set up the painting area by collecting water, choosing brushes and dispensing their own paint.

Children are encouraged to develop a real enjoyment of reading through sharing stories. This helps them recognise sounds when they start to learn phonics. Staff keep a close eye on children's progress and intervene quickly to close any gaps. Most children leave Reception with a good level of development, readying them for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have responded thoughtfully to the changing intake of the school and the increasing complexity of pupils' needs. Leaders and staff know pupils well and ensure that their needs are clearly identified, understood and shared across the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known, or previously known, to children's social care.

Staff receive suitable and targeted training so they understand how to adjust teaching to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs. As a result, adaptations that support pupils to learn are effective. Some pupils access an individualised curriculum using strategies such as daily sensory circuits and music interventions.

Leaders have a clear understanding of pupils' needs and track their progress closely. This information is used to inform future teaching for pupils with SEND. However, there are sometimes inconsistencies between the recommendations in pupils' statutory plans and

what is being delivered in the classroom. This can lead to a lack of precision about what area of learning needs priority. Work to address this is underway.

Leaders take a carefully considered approach to how they support those in receipt of pupil premium funding. The impact of this is regularly reviewed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are receiving the most effective provision.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently strengthened important systems, including those relating to attendance and assessment, and parts of the curriculum. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context. This enables them to make well-considered decisions about which aspects of the school's provision to prioritise for improvement. Leaders successfully model their high expectations of what pupils can achieve, both academically and personally, to staff and pupils alike.

Leaders ensure that staff regularly access high-quality training that is relevant to their roles. Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies and professionals, including the virtual school for children in care. The school's current engagement with a local authority writing project is helping staff develop their expertise further. Staff value this outward-facing approach and the opportunities it brings. Staff report that they feel well equipped and supported to carry out their duties. They say that leaders are mindful of their workload and wellbeing and that what they do is noticed and valued.

Governors bring a wide range of skills to their roles. They are proud of the school's caring ethos. Governors' visits to school help them to gain an accurate understanding of what is happening. This enables them to hold leaders to account and support them in making well-informed decisions about how best to meet pupils' needs.

Parents talk warmly about leaders and staff. They appreciate being kept well informed about their child's learning and say that staff are always visible and approachable.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have embedded a personal development programme that shapes pupils' views and attitudes and encourages them to be aspirational. Pupils gain a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They appreciate that everyone is unique and recognise that treating others unfairly is never acceptable. Pupils celebrate diversity. They learn about different faiths and cultures through the curriculum and by celebrating a range of festivals such as Easter, Holi and their Eid fair.

Pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships. They identify trust as a key part of friendship and understand the importance of consent. Pupils learn about mental health and wellbeing, how to keep physically healthy and how to stay safe online. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities, including reading ambassadors and sports leaders. School councillors speak with pride about the impact of their recent family quiz night fundraiser. These roles enable them to experience being positive members of a community.

Staff organise regular sports competitions, for example in cross-country running, netball and basketball. All pupils have the opportunity to represent their school. Pupils develop their

talents and interests through a wide range of activities that enhance learning, both within the curriculum and beyond the school day. Trips to the zoo, a mill and outdoor adventure centres develop pupils' problem-solving and social skills. The school nurtures pupils' talents through extra-curricular clubs such as musical theatre, art and football. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who face other barriers, benefit from these experiences.

Pastoral support is effective. The school's mental health lead provides support for pupils at difficult times in their lives. Because of the strong relationships pupils have with staff, they feel confident to ask for help when they need it.

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

The school's motto, 'enquiring minds and caring hearts', is lived out in daily life at Mills Hill Primary. Pupils are warmly welcomed into school by staff who care about them and encourage them to shine. Pupils, including those who face disadvantages, enjoy their learning and are eager to talk about what they are working on.

From the beginning of the early years, children thrive. Staff know every child well and build trusting relationships that help pupils feel safe and confident. Across key stages, pupils benefit from effective and inclusive teaching. A broad curriculum helps them build knowledge securely over time. Pupils make secure progress from their starting points. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils thrive in calm and supportive surroundings. Behaviour is positive and respectful. For example, pupils listen politely to each other, wait for their turn to speak and contribute in a mature way to group discussions. Pupils report that bullying is rare and staff deal with any unkind behaviour quickly and effectively. Pupils want to come to school. Their rates of attendance are high.

Leaders place equal emphasis on pupils' personal development as they do their academic achievement. Wider curriculum subjects such as music, drama and physical education are afforded high importance. Pupils are encouraged to play musical instruments such as brass instruments and flute. Many sing in the school choir too. Regular performances in school enable pupils to proudly showcase their talents and develop confidence in their own ability. By attending drama shows at local secondary schools, pupils gain inspiration to be creative and develop their theatrical skills. Pupils of all abilities are proud and enthusiastic to represent their school in local sports competitions.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are purposeful and provide effective catch-up when needed. In addition, pupils' education, health and care plans should be carefully considered when making these adaptations.

- Leaders should support staff to strengthen the teaching of writing and spelling so that this is coherent, consistent and effective across all phases of the school.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Monika Miah.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors,

Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.

Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

A new headteacher took up post in September 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Greg Ball

Lead inspector:

Ruth Moran, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Michelle Joyce, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Hesmondhalgh, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

627

Well 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

656

Well 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)

17.28%

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

2.71%

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

8.45%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below 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	53%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	65%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	58%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	84%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

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

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

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	56%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	14%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	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)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	43%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	56%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	21%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	35%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	69%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	14%	67%	-53 pp
2022/23 (final)	29%	66%	-38 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)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	80%	-44 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	43%	78%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	78%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	21%	78%	-56 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	72%	81%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	79%	-36 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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.4%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.8%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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