

Mather Street Primary School

Address: Mather Street, Failsworth, Manchester, M35 0DT

Unique reference number (URN): 105649

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.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have highly effective systems to identify pupils' needs and barriers to learning. They make sure that staff are fully aware of the challenges that may prevent some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, from achieving well or thriving during their primary education. Consequently, leaders and staff know each individual pupil very well. Staff are well trained. They are fully equipped to provide the support, care and resources that are necessary to help pupils' overcome the difficulties that hinder their learning and/or wellbeing. Leaders work well with a range of external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need. When necessary, leaders make astute decisions, based on pupils' best interests, about the use of alternative provision. This ensures that staff's work to support pupils with social and emotional needs is complemented well.

Leaders' use of pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils is successful in ensuring that these pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The school caters for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. A considerable number of pupils join the school at different times of the year, either from other schools or from abroad. Leaders ensure that these pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, receive the guidance that they need to progress well from their different starting points.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide a wealth of meaningful experiences to ensure that pupils broaden their horizons and gain a deep sense of the world around them. This provision ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have high aspirations for their future and are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

The offer to promote pupils' personal development is tailored to the local context and pupils' needs and interests. It ensures that pupils can develop their own unique characteristics. Pupils understand that it is more than acceptable to be different. They embrace the differences between themselves and others, celebrating the richness that this brings to their school community. Pupils gain a detailed knowledge of fundamental British values and they have a strong insight into other faiths and cultures.

There is a comprehensive relationships curriculum in place as part of pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils have a strong moral sense of right and wrong. They understand how to resist peer pressure and resolve conflicts with a maturity that belies their age. They know what a positive relationship look like and they have a highly evolved understanding of how to manage risks to their own welfare, including when online. They respect the rights and opinions of others.

Leaders have put in place a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. They actively seek out which clubs pupils want to attend so that as many as possible have opportunities to learn

new skills or extend their talents and interests. Older pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities. They are proud to represent their school, such as through assemblies organised by pupil health ambassadors. Pupils' work with a professional orchestra gives them an insight into the culture that surrounds them.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Over time, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average. However, this data does not represent the real story of the school's context. Many pupils start at the school at different times of the year. Some of these pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. These pupils are successful in progressing well from their starting points but they do not always have the time to catch up and reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6. Those pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who have been at the school for the longest time progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils typically develop the basic skills that they need in reading, writing and number. However, some pupils do not gain a fluent handwriting style. This hinders them from writing accurately in subjects other than English. Nonetheless, pupils are generally well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the design of the curriculum. They have brought a clear focus on specific vocabulary to help deepen pupils' learning of each topic that they study. Staff reinforce this language consistently well. As a result, pupils recall key knowledge in subjects across the curriculum. Additionally, phonics is delivered consistently well throughout the early years and key stage 1 to ensure that pupils read accurately and with increasing fluency.

Leaders have enhanced their focus on developing pupils' basic English and mathematics skills to make sure that pupils have secure foundations for later learning. Teachers have a clear understanding of the key knowledge that pupils need to remember. They quickly pick up on pupils' misconceptions in lessons to ensure that misunderstandings do not persist over time. However, teachers' work to address errors in pupils' handwriting is less successful.

Teachers question pupils' thinking to deepen their learning. They know the needs of pupils well, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers are adept at adjusting and adapting their teaching so that pupils who need extra help learn successfully. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have sharpened their focus on children acquiring a broad and adventurous range of vocabulary. These improvements ensure that all staff skilfully interact with children to successfully develop their communication and language. This is helping children to learn more of the curriculum across all areas of learning. Reading is a priority in the early years. As a result, children learn to read and they are using their phonics knowledge increasingly well to write simple sentences.

Staff check on children's understanding regularly. They adjust their teaching to help children overcome misconceptions or barriers to learning. The questions that staff ask are designed to help deepen children's knowledge. This enables children to progress well through all aspects of the curriculum.

The provision in the Nursery Year lays appropriate foundations for children's future learning. By the time they reach the end of their Reception Year, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Children have highly positive and trusting relationships with staff, who genuinely care about children's welfare and education. All staff gently nurture children so that they gain a positive sense of themselves and an eagerness to learn. The school works in partnership with parents and carers by offering open days and workshops, so that parents can support their child's learning at home.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors assure themselves that they accurately understand the school's effectiveness by using external partners to validate their evaluation. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They question leaders to gain a detailed understanding of how the school uses additional funding to ensure it is making a positive difference to disadvantaged pupils. However, this insight is less well developed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or those pupils who have other barriers to learning.

Leaders have stabilised staffing during a time of turbulence and at the same time have brought about a number of necessary changes to refresh and reinvigorate the school's curriculum. Leaders have also improved the leadership of the curriculum, early years and of SEND. Pupils are reaping the benefits of these improvements. The support that they receive ensure that they achieve well. Leaders' work to increase pupils' attendance rates has not had the same impact, but they are taking the right actions to bring about change.

Staff are positive about the steps that leaders take to look after their wellbeing and to reduce their workload. They appreciate the way in which leaders have provided them with a range of development opportunities to strengthen their teaching skills and expertise. Parents and carers are complimentary about the support that they receive, such as through workshops where they learn how to support their children's learning.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Many pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Rates of persistent absenteeism remain high. As a result, pupils miss out on learning and the range of exciting opportunities that the school has to offer. Leaders have strengthened the systems and processes for monitoring attendance, enabling them to target their work more successfully to reduce pupils' absence. However, this work is still at an early stage.

Leaders set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff follow the school's policy consistently well. They make sensible adjustments for some pupils so that they begin to manage their own feelings and behaviour. For example, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive a range of strategies matched to their sensory needs so they are ready for learning. All pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning.

Pupils behave well throughout the school day. Lessons and social times are typically settled. Pupils are polite and pleasant to one another. They feel safe because staff deal with behaviour issues quickly. As a result, discrimination, harassment and bullying rarely happen. If they should, such incidents are dealt with effectively.

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

Pupils at Mather Street Primary love coming to school. Staff warmly welcome them at the start of each day. Clear routines help pupils settle quickly to their learning. For example, children in the early years make a prompt start to their day because they know what is expected of them. Pupils are happy. They build positive relationships with their peers and the caring and supportive staff. Pupils feel included in school life. They are proud to be a member of its community. The way in which their differences are celebrated enriches pupils' personal development. They learn about different cultures and beliefs. They are tolerant and respectful of others. Pupils feel safe, and they are kept safe in school.

Pupils enjoy learning about interesting topics in the subjects that they study. Their experiences extend beyond the curriculum. This helps engage pupils' interest, deepen their knowledge and raise their aspirations for the future. For example, older pupils participate in mock trials and hold debates before a magistrate. Pupils also have a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents. Extra curricular clubs are designed to match pupils' interests.

Generally, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in learning. Staff address pupils' individual needs effectively. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to learning.

Pupils across the school behave well. They typically have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils say they feel safe from the harmful effects of bullying because occurrences are rare. This is because staff deal with misbehaviour effectively. Despite recent

improvements, the expectations for pupils' attendance are not high enough to ensure that this is similar to pupils nationally. These pupils miss out on the range of exciting opportunities available at school.

Next steps

- Leaders should work more effectively with parents and carers to address the persistent absence of some pupils so that they do not miss out on the wealth of opportunities available for their personal development.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers address weaknesses in some pupils' handwriting skills so that these pupils write legibly and accurately across the curriculum.
 - Governors should ensure that they have a clearer oversight of the achievement of some vulnerable pupil groups.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Samantha Gibson.

The school is part of a federation called MY Schools Together.

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

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

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders. They also spoke with staff and pupils and members of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The school has undergone a period of significant change to the teaching staff.

Executive Headteacher: Martine Buckley

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Clare Baron, Ofsted Inspector

Cath Cooke, 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

209

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

240

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)

56.25%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

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

5.74%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.22%

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

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	45%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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)	48%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	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	54%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	55%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	55%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	43%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	23%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	44%	Close to average

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	69%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	31%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	89%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	47%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	38%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	79%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	59%	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 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	43%	68%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	23%	69%	-46 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	67%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 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	69%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	31%	81%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	89%	80%	10 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	78%	-2 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	47%	78%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	78%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	77%	-30 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	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	81%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	79%	0 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	79%	-14 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)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.8%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	22.0%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.3%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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