

Ashton Primary School

Address: Ainsdale Drive, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 1TU

Unique reference number (URN): 119238

Inspection report: 21 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the reasons behind pupils' absences. They have suitable strategies in place to help remove any barriers that may get in the way of pupils attending school regularly. Leaders monitor patterns and trends in attendance data. They then take appropriate action to ensure that pupils who are persistently absent attend school more regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance rates are similar to the national average.

Staff consistently follow the school's behaviour policy to ensure that pupils behave well. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on and manage their own emotions and feelings and to consider those of others. As a result, the school is a calm place where pupils feel respected. They feel safe from the harmful effects of bullying because staff address any misbehaviour quickly and effectively. Discrimination, harassment and any form of abuse or violence, including online, are not tolerated.

Pupils know that staff care for them. There are effective strategies in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes towards school. Disruption to learning is rare.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum in the early years that is starting to make a difference to children's achievement. Staff have received support and training to ensure that their interactions with children are purposeful and widen children's vocabulary and language. This focus is starting to pay off as children are meeting the higher expectations that have been set for their learning.

Reading is a priority in the early years. Children enthusiastically apply their phonics knowledge. They read with increasing accuracy so that they are ready for their next steps in learning.

Teachers design a broad range of interesting and engaging tasks across the early years environment to develop all aspects of children's learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's curiosity that continues well beyond the Reception Year. Children are becoming increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

Staff engage well with parents and carers. For example, parents are invited to workshops, such as for phonics, and to see how children's learning is developed through 'come and see' sessions where parents learn alongside their children in class.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have suitable processes for identifying and supporting pupils with barriers to their learning and wellbeing. This starts from the moment that children enter the early years. Leaders have ensured that staff are suitably trained to meet pupils' needs and make sure

that everyone feels valued and included. For example, leaders identify individual ways of working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to help staff to remove barriers to their learning. For pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs or those with social care involvement, this support focuses on a range of nurturing strategies so that these pupils are ready to learn. Leaders carefully check on the impact that their different strategies are making, and they continually adjust their approaches when needed.

Leaders ensure that they listen to parents and carers. Parents' views and the advice from other professionals, including the virtual school, inform the high-quality training that staff receive to ensure that pupils' needs are supported well.

The pupil premium funding is used well to help disadvantaged pupils keep up with the intended curriculum in English and mathematics. Although there are some weaknesses in the curriculum on offer to all pupils, the support that disadvantaged pupils receive generally helps them to learn what they should.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The programme to promote pupils' personal development is effective. It provides a wide range of activities that enable pupils to become responsible, positive members of the school community. Pupils build a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures, including their own.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Through their work on fundamental British values, they learn about the principles of democracy and vote for their weekly debate topics. They are taught to listen to differing opinions and to form their own views on a range of topical issues. In this way, they learn how to resolve differences of opinion and the importance of understanding how others can have views that differ from their own. Pupils understand the importance of equality and how celebrating each other's uniqueness enriches their own lives.

Pupils learn how to maintain healthy relationships through studying scenarios that include peer pressure and other moral dilemmas. They know what it means to be a good friend and how to spot the signs that others may be taking advantage of them. They learn about concepts such as consent and how to manage risks, including when online.

Leaders have put together a well-thought-out range of opportunities within and beyond the curriculum that develop all pupils' social skills and interests, including opportunities for their creative and artistic development. These activities include trips and clubs that have been specifically designed to give disadvantaged pupils the experiences that they might not otherwise have. For example, leaders track pupils' participation in clubs to ensure that all pupils access opportunities that match their aspirations and ambitions.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

In some subjects and year groups, pupils make variable progress through the curriculum. This is because their prior learning is not secure. As such, some pupils find their work too easy, whereas others find it too difficult. This is reflected in published outcomes over time. Typically, Year 6 pupils do not attain as well as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also true for the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. As such, pupils' readiness for their next steps in education is not as secure as it should be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils who face barriers to learning generally make better progress through the curriculum, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, because of the support that they receive.

Recently, due to the improvements in the curriculum, pupils are making greater gains in their learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Even so, some older pupils continue to have gaps in their learning that hinder their academic achievement.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

At present, the curriculum is not shaped well enough to enable pupils to gain a secure grasp of key knowledge. Leaders have begun to redesign the curriculum, but this is at an early stage in some subjects. As a result, pupils' learning is variable.

The checks that teachers make on pupils' knowledge are not consistently effective. They do not enable teachers to spot and then address gaps in pupils' skills and understanding. Consequently, gaps in pupils' learning persist over time.

In contrast, teachers are suitably trained to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with identified barriers to learning. Typically, teachers use questioning well and model new learning to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn what is intended.

The new leadership team has an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and the strengths and weaknesses in how it is taught. They are taking the right actions to bring about improvement. For example, leaders are working well with staff to build their subject knowledge and teaching strategies. Leaders' focus on English and mathematics is having a positive impact. Teachers are better equipped to teach reading and to develop pupils' vocabulary. There is also now greater security in the teaching of spelling and securing pupils' understanding of basic number.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention ●

The governing body has experienced some turbulence in its membership in recent times. Governors have not quality assured some aspects of the school's work as well as they

should. This means that they are not fully aware of the impact of curriculum weaknesses on pupils' achievement. Otherwise, governors ensure that their statutory duties are met.

Current leaders have a secure grasp of what needs to be done at the school. They are tackling historical issues with the curriculum head-on. Leaders have successfully made a demonstrable difference to some curriculum subjects and to the provision within the early years. They have also set higher expectations for pupils' behaviour. Subject leaders and teachers are being empowered to develop and deliver the curriculum. This includes a wealth of relevant support and training to develop staff's expertise.

All decisions made by leaders are in the best interests of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff appreciate the way in which leaders have managed change. They also appreciate the consideration that leaders give to their workload and wellbeing. Parents and carers are happy with the way in which leaders engage with them so that they can support children's learning at home.

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

Pupils love their school, and they enjoy learning. They have a range of opportunities to learn about the local heritage and culture through events, trips and visits. These experiences add to the curriculum, such as visiting a local mill to complement their history work. There are also a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests, such as through ultraviolet dodgeball, learning a musical instrument and clog dancing. In addition, each year group completes work to improve the community, such as raising money to buy food and cooking equipment for a local charity for the homeless.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging at the school. They feel included in all aspects of school life. The trusting relationships that pupils have with staff help them to feel safe. Pupils get along well with each other. They have positive attitudes to learning, and they respond well to the high expectations that are set for their behaviour. Pupils agree that bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff deal with it promptly. Pupils' attendance at school is similar to the national average.

Some pupils do not currently achieve as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders are developing the curriculum, but these changes are not fully in place. As a result, gaps in pupils' key knowledge persist. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is typically below the national average. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for their next steps in learning.

Leaders quickly identify the barriers that some pupils face to their learning and wellbeing. This enables staff to provide tailored support. This support helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and other disadvantaged pupils, to succeed.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to design and implement their new curriculum to ensure that pupils gain the key knowledge that they need in order to achieve well across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers check more consistently on what key knowledge pupils remember. They should ensure that gaps in learning are addressed so that pupils build secure knowledge over time and are ready for the next steps in their education.
 - Governors should ensure that they tighten their systems for quality assuring the work of the school and, in particular, the impact this has on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Edward Hughes Smith.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with members of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use alternative provision.

Since the previous inspection, all but 2 governors are new to the governing body. The current headteacher took up post in September 2025.

Headteacher : Laura Butterworth

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Trish Merritt, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Sherwin, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

204

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

210

Below 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)

38.73%

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

4.41%

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

14.71%

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

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	45%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

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	60%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	66%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	64%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	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 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	26%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	36%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	13%	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	40%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	43%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	31%	60%	Below

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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	51%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	26%	68%	-42 pp
2024/25 (revised)	36%	69%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	67%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	13%	66%	-54 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	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (revised)	43%	81%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	80%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	31%	78%	-47 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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	78%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	77%	-15 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	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	79%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	79%	-42 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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	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)	15.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.4%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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