

Banks Methodist School

Address: Chapel Lane, Banks, Southport, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 8EY

Unique reference number (URN): 119405

Inspection report: 6 January 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.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Some pupils do not achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Published outcomes over time do not show a consistently secure picture of achievement. Weaknesses in teaching in early reading, writing and mathematics contribute to pupils' uneven achievement. This means that some pupils do not secure the sounds they need to read accurately. This affects their reading confidence and writing accuracy. In mathematics, pupils practise incorrect methods and do not achieve well because errors go unaddressed.

In some wider curriculum subjects, pupils achieve well because they build essential knowledge securely but in other subjects, gaps remain due to inconsistent teaching of curriculum content. As a result, some pupils leave the school without the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Pupils' overall attendance is below national averages. Some pupils miss school too often and this interrupts their learning. This is particularly the case for some disadvantaged pupils and pupils who face additional challenges. As a result, learning is fragmented for these pupils and they do not benefit fully from classroom teaching or wider curriculum opportunities. Leaders work with families and use supportive approaches to encourage attendance. They contact parents and carers when concerns arise and promote routines that help pupils to attend more regularly. These actions are effective for some pupils. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of their attendance strategies precisely enough. Concerns are not consistently escalated in a timely way when a pupil's absence continues. As a result, improvements are not sustained and absence continues to affect learning for some pupils.

Behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming. In lessons, pupils usually follow routines and respond well to staff guidance. Staff apply clear expectations with consistency. This helps lessons remain focused. Pupils feel safe and confident moving around the school. Staff address any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying effectively. Discrimination is not tolerated. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, which contributes to a supportive environment, where pupils have positive attitudes. Staff help pupils resolve worries or minor disagreements, and pupils know who to approach if they need help.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Teaching does not help some pupils build learning securely over time. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils do not consistently remember what they need to move on to more complex learning. At times, pupils are unclear about what they are learning and teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding. As a result, some of the gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge are not identified quickly enough and pupils do not learn as well as they could. The curriculum is well sequenced from Years 1 to 6 and broadly reflects the national

curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects and classroom routines usually support a calm learning environment.

On occasions, early reading is not taught with sufficient accuracy. Phonics teaching lacks precision and errors in how staff teach phonics lead to some pupils learning incorrect letter sounds. This makes it harder for some pupils to develop the skills they need to read independently. Occasionally, adults do not identify or address early writing needs, such as correct pencil grip and letter formation, accurately or in a timely way.

Teachers do not reliably identify mistakes or misunderstandings in pupils' work and incorrect work is sometimes accepted as correct. This means that teachers do not adapt learning to support pupils effectively and pupils repeat their mistakes. Leaders have provided teachers with some training to address this, but it has not led to consistent improvement in classroom practice.

Early years

Needs attention 

While routines help children settle well, the early years provision and curriculum do not consistently help children build knowledge and skills from Nursery to Reception. The early years curriculum does not consider the important knowledge and skills children should learn or how learning builds over time. Activities do not always match children's needs closely enough. As a result, some children are unclear about the purpose of activities and do not make the progress they should from their individual starting points.

Staff interactions with children vary in quality. At times, staff do not model language clearly or ask purposeful questions or guide children with their learning effectively. This limits children's communication, engagement and depth of learning. Some children do not develop the fine motor control they need for early writing. Staff do not consistently identify or support children's early writing needs.

Leaders value partnerships with parents and carers and staff gather relevant information about children when they start at the school. However, this information does not routinely shape learning or support disadvantaged children or children with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Phonics teaching for children in the Reception Year lacks precision. As a result, children are not consistently well prepared for Year 1.

Children benefit from predictable routines and caring staff. Staff help children to manage their emotions, build friendships and feel safe. Behaviour is calm and children are supervised well throughout the day.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders' efforts to promote a secure culture of inclusion are not consistently effective. Their approaches do not ensure that all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerabilities receive the support they need to learn securely. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders use additional funding to provide extra support for some disadvantaged pupils who need it. However, leaders do not check closely enough how well strategies, including staff

training and guidance, improves classroom practice for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils do not access the curriculum as well as they should or achieve as well as they could over time.

Leaders have implemented 'pupil profiles', which bring together information from parents and carers and external professionals so that staff have a clearer picture of pupils' needs. In practice, staff do not routinely use this information to shape teaching. Staff do not use the advice about support set out in pupils' education, health and care plans to inform teaching, particularly where pupils need support with communication. For example, staff do not consistently adapt activities to help pupils understand new learning. As a result, some pupils lose interest in lessons.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders are committed and reflective. They know their community well and understand the challenges pupils face. Leaders have identified appropriate priorities, including for early years, phonics and handwriting. However, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is not precise enough. They focus more on whether actions are taking place than on the impact these actions have on pupils' learning and experiences. As a result, leaders do not identify weaknesses in teaching, inclusion and attendance quickly enough.

Leaders have put in place a programme of professional learning for staff. However, this does not have a consistent positive impact on classroom practice. Some teachers are not fully confident in applying what they have learned, which limits improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors are supportive and visible. They meet their statutory duties and ask appropriate questions about safeguarding, resources and pupils' experiences. However, they do not have a clear enough understanding of how well pupils are learning or the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve some aspects of the school. At times, this limits the level of challenge they provide and how well they hold leaders to account. Leaders and governors recognise this weakness and are taking steps to strengthen the effectiveness of their oversight.

Staff value the support leaders provide and appreciate that leaders listen to them and are open to staff feedback. Leaders are considerate of staff wellbeing and workload.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Leaders have appropriate ambitions to support pupils' personal development and wellbeing. However, they do not check closely enough that the curriculum and wider opportunities support these ambitions. For example, pupils have some opportunities to contribute to school life and value being involved, however, opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and leadership are limited. Current roles of responsibility in school are not well developed and pupils do not have enough chances to practise responsibility or take part in decision-making. As a result, some pupils do not develop a secure understanding of citizenship.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum does not develop pupils' understanding in sufficient depth. For example, leaders have not ensured that pupils consistently understand how different aspects of learning connect or how learning in PSHE relates to life beyond school.

Pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships through relationships and sex education and health education. They understand what makes a good friend and how to stay safe when using the internet. However, their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is limited. Pupils know that they should respect others, but some struggle to explain why this matters or how it links to life in modern Britain.

Pupils feel cared for and supported at school. The school's values are reflected in the way adults model kindness, respect and forgiveness. Pupils understand staff expectations around the importance of respecting others' personal space and keeping themselves safe. This supports pupils' confidence and wellbeing.

Pupils take part in trips and wider activities that broaden their experiences beyond the classroom. They enjoy visiting places that enhance their learning, such as trips linked to environmental work and sporting events and competitions. These experiences help pupils learn about teamwork and the wider world.

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

Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. However, attendance is not high enough for all pupils. Some pupils miss school too often and do not benefit fully from lessons or wider activities. This affects how well some pupils engage with learning over time.

From the early years, pupils' experience of learning is uneven. Teaching is not sufficiently effective in helping pupils to remember what they have learned previously in the curriculum, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that some pupils find it hard to build new learning securely. As a result, pupils' day-to-day experience of learning is not consistently positive.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not supported as well as they should be in lessons. Staff do not ensure that inclusive strategies are implemented effectively to help pupils with SEND develop independence and access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Staff know pupils well. It is a small school with a big heart. Staff greet pupils warmly and help them to feel safe and settled. Clear routines support a calm start to the day. Pupils are confident about who to go to if they need help. This helps them to feel secure, particularly those who may find school more challenging. Pupils are cared for and valued as individuals. Their behaviour around the school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils respond well to clear expectations and adult guidance. Relationships are respectful and pupils treat one another with kindness. When concerns such as bullying arise, staff respond appropriately. This supports a settled atmosphere for learning.

Pupils take part in wider experiences that broaden their understanding of the world. Leaders use the school minibuses so pupils can take part in visits beyond the local area. Pupils participate in eco-projects, including visiting a recycling centre, and represent the school in sporting events, such as football competitions. Visits from the local police help pupils to understand the rule of law. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, responsibility and awareness of life beyond the classroom.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is high quality, helps all pupils to remember important knowledge and skills effectively and supports them to achieve well.
 - Leaders should support staff to implement effective strategies to promote an inclusive culture so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils can access the curriculum effectively.
 - Leaders should strengthen attendance procedures to ensure that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend school regularly.
 - Leaders should ensure that the curriculum and wider enrichment opportunities support pupils' personal development and wellbeing effectively so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - Governors should improve their strategic oversight of the school to ensure that leaders' actions to improve the school, including professional development of staff, are precisely measured, timely and lead to necessary improvements.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Stephen Wedlin.

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 special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke with a group of governors that included the chair of the governing body.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, parents and carers and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Dianne Holcroft, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Andy Cunningham, His Majesty's 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

71

Well below 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

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.33%

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

2.82%

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

19.72%

Above 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	25%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	43%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	10%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	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	42%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	43%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	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	42%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	30%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	38%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	43%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	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	18%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	45%	62%	Below

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

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	45%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	36%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	18%	68%	-49 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	45%	80%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	45%	78%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	36%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	7.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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)	26.4%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.9%	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.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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