

Darwen St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Address: Turncroft Road, DARWEN, Lancashire, BB3 2BW

Unique reference number (URN): 119458

Inspection report: 6 May 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 are highly skilled at identifying pupils with additional needs. They ensure that staff have the specialist training needed to address pupils' barriers to learning and/or their wellbeing. The support that staff provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is closely matched to their needs so that they access the curriculum successfully. Staff check on pupils' learning with precision to spot where some pupils may need extra help. This is put in place swiftly to reinforce key learning.

Leaders have carefully designed imaginative outdoor learning opportunities that offer a wealth of high-quality experiences to enhance pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This has been highly effective at addressing barriers to learning and wellbeing experienced by some pupils, such as those who are known (or previously known) to social care and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff ensure that these pupils feel secure, included and ready to learn. As a result, these pupils have the confidence and enthusiasm that enable them to flourish.

Leaders have ensured that additional funding is used to enhance disadvantaged pupils' experiences. This includes the work that leaders have done on successfully improving the attendance of these pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed an extensive and highly effective programme to enrich pupils' personal development and relationships education. Staff nurture pupils to become active and positive members of the school community. Pupils celebrate and value each other's differences. They have an in-depth knowledge of what it means to be equal and a detailed understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Leaders ensure that pupils' relationships education equips them extremely well to understand what makes a positive relationship. Pupils gain a deep understanding of aspects such as consent, peer pressure and how other people can influence their choices. They have a detailed understanding of online safety. They know how to protect their own wellbeing from negative aspects of social media.

Pupils actively take on board key learning about healthy lifestyles and use this to make positive choices about exercise and diet. They have a comprehensive understanding of the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs.

Pupils use their extensive understanding of fundamental British values to inform the way in which they act with others. For example, they understand democracy and listen to the views of others, respecting differing opinions.

Leaders have devised an excellent set of additional opportunities to widen pupils' experiences. These activities instil a sense of awe and reinforce key aspects of the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoyed a visit from a Viking to complement their history

work while others were fascinated by a guest speaker who explained the devastating effects of knife crime.

Pupils relish the opportunities that they have to take on leadership roles within the school. For some, this means actively contributing to improving the school by being part of the school's ethos group or being a school councillor or an eco-warrior. For others, it means leading clubs for others, further extending the range of activities that develop pupils' talents and interests.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well through the curriculum. Typically, pupils achieve well. This is generally reflected in the published data at the end of key stage 2, where pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. This is also true for the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. This means that pupils are equipped well with the phonics knowledge that they need to read accurately.

Pupils, including those who face barriers to learning, generally secure basic skills well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, the improvements in pupils' handwriting enables them to write more fluently so that they can explain their thinking in subjects such as science, geography and history. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the reasons for pupils' absences. They are effective in removing the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving. It is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders are highly successful in reducing persistent absence. As a result, these pupils benefit from the interesting range of activities on offer more often than they did in the past.

Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions. As a result, they behave well and treat each other with sensitivity and respect. The school is a calm environment and there is little disruption to learning. Staff tackle incidents of misbehaviour quickly and decisively. As a result, instances of bullying, harassment or the use of derogatory language are rare. However, leaders do not analyse incidents as well as they could to spot patterns and trends to ensure the number of incidents reduces over time.

The positive relationships that staff have with pupils underpin their approach to behaviour. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with social, emotional and mental health needs are settled and feel secure in school. As a result, these pupils approach school with positive attitudes and manage their own behaviour well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately understand the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. They have carefully prioritised what they want to improve. The actions they have taken are having an impact. For example, leaders ensure that the curriculum clearly sets out the key knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to know in each subject.

In lessons, staff ask appropriate questions to deepen pupils' understanding. They support pupils' learning well by showing pupils successful examples before asking them to work with greater independence. When necessary, there is support for pupils if they are having difficulty in understanding key learning. Staff skilfully adapt their approach to meet the needs of pupils with identified barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Generally, teachers ensure that pupils gain a secure understanding of the basic knowledge that they need for the next steps in learning, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, recent positive action has ensured that pupils' handwriting has improved. However, staff are not as adept at consistently addressing errors in pupils' use of punctuation and spelling.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children's personal development is at the heart of the early years provision. Staff's nurturing approach towards children accurately sums up the school's motto of 'sowing the seeds of tomorrow'. Children develop the confidence, cooperation skills and ability to overcome difficulties. This prepares them well for their next steps and beyond. In the Reception Year, children develop a love of learning, and this is something that carries on throughout their school life. Staff ensure that children are valued and included in the early years. They are skilled at ensuring those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with barriers to learning are supported well.

Leaders quickly establish children's starting points and adapt the curriculum accordingly. This gives children a positive start to their education. Staff set appropriate ambitions for children, including those who have barriers to learning. Over the course of the Reception Year, children generally progress well from their starting points.

The conversations that staff have with children prompts them to explain their thinking. The way that staff show children how to speak correctly extends children's vocabulary. Phonics in the early years is taught well and prepares children for reading with accuracy and greater fluency at the start of Year 1. Children develop a secure understanding of the basics in reading and mathematics. However, there are times when children's letter formation and some basic spellings are not reinforced as well as they could be. Nevertheless, children are prepared well for key stage 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors generally have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are proactive in prioritising what they want to improve. Leaders' actions are raising

expectations for pupils' achievement in all aspects of school life, including for pupils' attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Overall, governors have an accurate view of how well the school is performing. They ensure that their statutory duties are met. For example, governors question leaders on a range of matters. They receive external reports to assure themselves about the effectiveness of the school's work. They also undertake rigorous checks on the quality of measures to safeguard pupils.

Staff welcome the changes that leaders are bringing to the school. They appreciate the way in which leaders and governors support their professional learning, workload and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are positive about the way in which leaders support them and their children. Leaders ensure that parents are welcome and that the school community celebrates pupils' successes. For example, leaders offer families a free meal during parents' evening, along with a presentation of pupils' activities and achievements.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are greeted warmly each morning by kind and caring staff. Pupils value the positive relationships with staff and their peers. They attend regularly and feel safe at school. They have a deep sense of belonging and are proud to be part of the school community.

Pupils behave well. They make the right choices and have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Staff address any early signs of misbehaviour, including bullying, quickly and effectively. Throughout the school, pupils are inquisitive and polite and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils generally achieve well. They enjoy their lessons because teachers provide interesting tasks that bring learning to life. Pupils are allowed to make mistakes and to try different ways of working. As a result, pupils are empowered to become independent and reflective learners.

Where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have barriers to learning, staff ensure that support is matched specifically to pupils' needs. Pupils feel valued. Staff nurture pupils' individuality and celebrate their unique characteristics. Pupils are included in all aspects of school life. As a result of the support that they receive, they generally progress well through the curriculum. Pupils are typically well prepared for the next stages in their education.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional opportunities to broaden their experiences beyond the classroom. They embrace the extensive outdoor learning on offer and benefit from a range of visitors and visits to places of interest. They enjoy many after-school activities, such as clubs for a diverse range of interests including crochet, morris dancing and kung fu.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address common basic errors more consistently in pupils' written work to help them to achieve well across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should identify patterns and trends in pupils' behaviour to inform their strategies to further reduce the number of incidents of misbehaviour over time.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Fred Kershaw.

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 governors, the headteacher, other leaders, staff, parents, carers and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Blackburn. Its last section 48 inspection was in December 2021.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new leadership team is in place, including a new headteacher.

The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Susannah Burgess

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Wendy Tracey, Ofsted Inspector

Steven Rooney, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

257

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

315

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)

33.85%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

3.89%

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

18.29%

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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	43%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	64%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	35%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	44%	Above

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	56%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	47%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	69%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	58%	Above

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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	59%	Above

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	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	35%	69%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	67%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	66%	-3 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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	78%	-15 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	69%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	78%	-1 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	77%	-5 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	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	82%	79%	3 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 (3 term)	6.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.7%	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 (3 term)	15.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.6%	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.

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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