

Maghull High School

Address: Ormonde Drive, Maghull, Liverpool, Merseyside, L31 7AW

Unique reference number (URN): 137520

Inspection report: 28 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

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders and staff share the vision that every pupil is important. There are effective systems in place to identify pupils who may experience barriers to their learning or wellbeing. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers know their pupils well. They receive helpful training on how best to support pupils with SEND. Typically, staff offer bespoke guidance that supports these pupils to learn. Often, this helps pupils to build their knowledge over time.

Leaders are aware that disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as well as they should in national examinations at the end of key stage 4. Leaders' use of additional funding for these pupils is having an impact, and, more recently, there have been some improvements in how well these pupils achieve, particularly in English and mathematics.

Staff work alongside families and external agencies, including the local authority and children's social care, to ensure that pupils receive timely help when they need it.

A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. Leaders take appropriate steps to find the right setting for these pupils. They regularly review these placements and work with the provisions to tailor the support offered. As a result, many of these pupils' attendance has improved.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Recently, leadership has strengthened, including at trust level. Leaders, including trustees and governors, have a sharp understanding of all aspects of the school. Leaders at all levels are realistic about the changes they have made. They are not complacent. Leaders are ambitious in what they want to achieve and know what they need to do to improve pupils' life chances.

In recent years, leaders have taken effective action to improve how pupils behave in school, how well everyone is included, the quality of the curriculum and their safeguarding practices. Leaders have secured the foundations needed to improve the quality of teaching and, consequently, how well pupils achieve in national examinations at the end of key stage 4.

Staff are proud to work at Maghull High School. They appreciate the consideration leaders have for their workload and wellbeing. Teachers and other staff receive a tailored programme of professional development. They work closely with leaders to develop their own practice. Many of the leaders' strategies to improve teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on how pupils learn.

Governors, trustees, parents and staff report that they receive timely and informative communication from the school. Parents are happy with the support their children receive.

Governors and trustees ensure that their statutory duties are met, for example by overseeing effective safeguarding systems. They regularly hold leaders accountable. Governors and trustees feel part of the school community. They share school leaders' ambition for what pupils can achieve.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently thought carefully about the experiences that they want pupils to have before they leave the school, as captured in the 'Maghull High Pledge'. These encompass cultural opportunities. For instance, Year 7 pupils recently attended an orchestral performance. The pledge also includes activities to develop confidence and independence, such as residential visits. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from this range of opportunities.

The school provides a suitable curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn a wide array of information, including about healthy relationships, democracy and financial management. In the main, pupils develop a secure understanding of these topics. In addition, leaders have taken thoughtful action to develop pupils' ability to articulate their views confidently and respectfully. This is beginning to show in pupils' interactions and discussions.

Leaders make sure that there are appropriate systems for pupils to share any worries they may have. Pupils feel safe and cared for. They know they can speak to staff. The wellbeing offer is effective and tailored to the needs of individuals. For example, pupils can access a range of pastoral support in the school's 'Phoenix Centre'.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in their community. Leaders are responsive to local and national concerns. This means that pupils have the knowledge they need to keep themselves away from harm.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a well-designed careers programme. Pupils receive bespoke guidance about the array of opportunities available. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, this offer is enhanced. Increasingly, pupils, including students in the sixth form, are transitioning successfully on to appropriate further education, employment or training when they leave school.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have embedded suitable study programmes in the sixth form. They have recently strengthened the curriculum. This is now carefully tailored to the needs of students. Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve assessment in the sixth form. Teachers know students very well. They work closely with students to identify any gaps in their knowledge. Bespoke opportunities for students to improve their work have a positive impact on the quality of work that they produce. Students value this help.

Students continue to benefit from the school's well-designed personal development programme. They have dedicated time to enhance their academic studies with a range of enrichment opportunities. Students work as role models to younger pupils and continue to support them as mentors.

Leaders' whole-school approach to inclusion extends to the sixth form. Students appreciate the care and compassion they receive. This is particularly the case for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Students receive personalised careers guidance. This includes appropriate work experience. They understand the range of possibilities available to them. Recently, more students have been moving on to highly ambitious university courses. This includes students with SEND and others who may face barriers to their learning.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

In national examinations at the end of key stage 4, pupils' achievement is lower than national averages. This includes disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently made appropriate changes to the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 to address historic weaknesses. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work. Achievement at key stage 5 is broadly in line with national averages.

Leaders' work to improve teaching is at an early stage. Teachers do not robustly check what pupils know effectively. This means that some pupils do not receive the help they need to progress well from their starting points.

Pupils who need support with reading receive the help they need. In many cases, these pupils develop their reading skills at a rapid rate. Pupils who need help with their writing and number skills are identified. However, the support they receive is in the early stages of development.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This has been the case for a number of years. As a result, these pupils do not benefit from the offer available in school. Recently, leaders have begun to implement innovative strategies to improve attendance. Some of these strategies have been effective. This means that the number of pupils with high levels of absence is reducing. Increasingly, these pupils are provided with a bespoke package of support to help them overcome any barriers to attending school.

Leaders have taken highly impactful steps to improve behaviour. Staff and pupils share a cohesive vision of respect and tolerance. Routines and standards are embedded. Pupils understand staff's high expectations of them. Consequently, lessons are tranquil and pupils can focus on their learning. They enjoy lessons. Bullying is not tolerated. There are clear systems in place to identify any incidents, and leaders deal with these appropriately. This is also the case for any use of discriminatory language. Leaders' support for pupils who may find it difficult to meet these high expectations is effective. If required, leaders make astute adjustments to the behaviour policies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers' checks on what pupils know are not consistently effective. They do not routinely identify misconceptions pupils may have. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning that are widening. Leaders know that this must improve. However, their actions to improve teaching have not impacted sufficiently on this aspect of teachers' practice.

Leaders have taken the right steps to strengthen the curriculum. This is now secure in all subjects and key stages. Teachers have a solid understanding of their subject. They share this knowledge clearly and precisely with pupils. Often, teachers skilfully explain new concepts.

Leaders and teachers know their pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Mostly, these pupils receive the right support to access the curriculum successfully.

Leaders have appropriate systems to identify any pupils who may need help with their reading, writing or number skills. In the main, pupils receive the help they need to develop these skills. This is particularly true for pupils who need help to read.

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

Pupils are proud to attend Maghull High School. They know that staff are mindful of their wellbeing and that they can share their worries if needed. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. The school's systems mean that any concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils know this.

Pupils benefit from a much calmer atmosphere now than in the past. Older pupils speak positively about the improvements that leaders have made to their learning environment. Clear routines and a shared vision of sharp lesson starts mean that most pupils arrive promptly, ready to learn. Pupils say that disruption to learning is uncommon and that staff deal with this fairly and consistently. Pupils value staff's commitment to rewarding positive behaviour. This helps pupils to feel safe and cared for. Furthermore, it is reflected in the reduction in suspensions and exclusions.

Despite the improvements that have been made, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils do not benefit fully from the school's tranquil and purposeful classrooms.

Improvements to the curriculum and some aspects of teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning in many cases. Staff know pupils well and provide support for those who may have barriers to their learning. That said, too many pupils leave school without achieving their potential in national examinations at the end of key stage 4.

There are many opportunities available to all pupils to broaden their horizons, for example science, technology, engineering and mathematics club, as well as a variety of sports.

Pupils receive careers guidance and support that enable them to leave school with a clear purpose, ready to take their place in society.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that effective assessment systems are in place to allow teachers to identify misconceptions in pupils' learning, ensure that any gaps are swiftly addressed and raise standards of achievement for all pupils.
 - Leaders should continue to further strengthen the strategies in place to improve attendance, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders, including the trust, should refine the processes in place to rigorously evaluate the impact of their actions so that they can continue to drive improvements.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Southport Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Raikes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stuart Bellerby.

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, the CEO and the director of education, 3 trustees, including the chair of the trust, and 3 members of the local governing committee, including the chair, during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Matthew Kay

Lead inspector:

Helen Fowler, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz Kelly, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Kenyon, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Meldrum, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Rix, His Majesty's Inspector

Marc Heron, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,104

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,349

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

27.55%

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: 28.9%

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

4.53%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.15%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	30.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.5%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.3%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	39.6	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.5	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.1	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.87	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.68	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	11.1%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	10.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	13.2%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	29.0	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.4	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	33.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.54	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.21	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	11.1%	53.1%	-42.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	10.9%	53.1%	-42.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	13.2%	52.4%	-39.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	29.0	50.4	-21.4
2023/24 (final)	27.4	50.0	-22.7
2022/23 (final)	33.4	50.3	-16.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.54	0.16	-1.71
2022/23 (final)	-1.21	0.17	-1.38

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	87%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	88%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	25.86	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.31	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	21.00	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.6	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

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)	12.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	13.7%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.6%	9.0%	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 (3 term)	33.5%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	40.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	41.2%	26.5%	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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