

Bury Church of England High School

Address: Haslam Brow, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 0TS

Unique reference number (URN): 148866

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 ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing are at the heart of leaders' work at this school. The thoughtful and well-planned programme of learning builds pupils' knowledge over time. Consequently, pupils understand important ideas of tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils show a thorough knowledge of what constitutes a healthy relationship. They know how to stay safe online. Pupils have a deep understanding of current affairs and appreciate diversity.

The personal development programme supports pupils to become thoughtful citizens. For example, pupils take part in sponsored walks to raise money for charity and volunteer at a local nursing home. Pupils know the importance of kindness. They make a positive difference to their community.

Leaders provide pupils with a broad range of extra-curricular activities. These help pupils to try new things and discover hidden talents. For example, pupils take part in drama productions, play sports and/or learn British Sign Language. The leadership opportunities, such as serving on the school council, help pupils to build confidence and develop teamwork skills.

Pastoral care is personalised and highly effective. This means pupils get the care and support they need quickly. Leaders use weekly meetings to make sure they can respond quickly to any changing needs a pupil might have. Access to a mental health professional in school, counselling and other specialist support means that pupils get the help they need in a timely way. This support has reduced barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing effectively.

Leaders make sure pupils have the information they need to make informed choices about their next steps. Pupils receive independent careers advice and learn about different jobs through trips and guest speakers. As a result of this, pupils know what they want to do when they leave school and, more importantly, what they need to do to achieve their goals. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, move on successfully to further education, employment or training, thanks to the support that they receive in school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils' achievement in public examinations at the end of key stage 4 is broadly in line with national averages. In some subjects, pupils achieve better than their peers nationally. Leaders now have a sharp focus on monitoring pupils' achievement. Where pupils are falling behind, they use targeted support to help them to catch up. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and/or those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well.

Generally, pupils build their knowledge well. However, in some cases pupils do not readily recall their prior learning. This means that, at times, they cannot connect their current and prior learning.

Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, employment or training. In the main, they have learned the necessary knowledge in English and mathematics to support future learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders use information about attendance well to track and monitor patterns of absence. They ensure that any absence is followed up promptly with telephone conversations and, where needed, home visits. Leaders use mentors to support those pupils who have very low rates of attendance. This has had a positive impact. Many of these pupils now attend school more regularly. While the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved, it remains below national averages. Leaders work with families to try to address any barriers these pupils face to attending school regularly.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them. They rise to the challenge and appreciate the positive rewards that they receive, for example postcards home and the chance to have tea with the headteacher. Leaders' strategies have reduced sanctions and suspensions for all groups of pupils. The school values of resilience, respect and responsibility support pupils to treat each other well. Bullying is rare. Thanks to the leaders' high expectations and embedded routines, pupils enjoy social time with their friends. They play well together and relax. In lessons, pupils are focused on their work. They are keen to share their learning and show pride in their endeavours.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the ambition of the curriculum. It is now ordered in a logical way. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to deliver new learning. On the whole, this helps pupils to learn well. Leaders have a secure understanding of which aspects of teaching and learning work well and where there is room for further improvement. For example, where they identify that teaching is inconsistent, they use coaching strategies to help bring about improvements.

Leaders have developed a clear lesson structure that helps pupils to learn. This includes the opportunity to recall prior learning at the start of each lesson. Furthermore, teachers break down new knowledge so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can understand new ideas. In the main, leaders ensure that reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. However, there are occasions when teachers do not identify misconceptions swiftly enough. As such, sometimes, pupils' mistakes go unnoticed and are repeated.

Leaders ensure that particular attention is paid to teaching new vocabulary. This helps pupils to broaden the language they are able to use. Leaders have prioritised reading. Those

pupils at the earliest stages of reading get the support they need to catch up quickly. Pupils read every day. They typically have positive attitudes towards reading.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have strengthened their work to identify any barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing. They use a range of information about pupils to make sure that the right support is put in place in a timely way. As such, for the most part, pupils receive the help that they need to overcome barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

Leaders have delivered staff training to ensure teachers are able to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. For example, teachers adapt learning through the use of technology and with the support of additional staff in the classroom. As such, pupils, including those with barriers to their learning, typically achieve well.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They use well-researched strategies to help pupils to address gaps in learning. Furthermore, leaders provide financial support so that disadvantaged pupils can participate in trips and visits alongside their peers. The impact of this work can be seen in improved achievement and participation. If a strategy is not working, leaders are quick to adapt what they are doing so that pupils get the support they need.

Leaders make effective use of alternative provision. This has helped some pupils attend school more regularly.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Recently, leaders have made positive changes to school life. Leaders, including those who are responsible for governance, are acutely aware of what is working well and what needs to develop further. For example, leaders have worked quickly to strengthen the ambition of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils benefit from greater consistency in teaching. They have made effective changes to the systems and staff that support those pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. As such, pupils get the help they need to overcome any challenges. Leaders act in the best interests of pupils.

Leaders have developed effective relationships with parents and carers. They work flexibly to ensure pupils get the support that they need. Leaders have prioritised building relationships with families when pupils join the school.

Governors bring a wealth of experience to the school. They use this knowledge to provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. Governors fulfil their duties. For example, they ensure that additional funding is used to reduce barriers to participation and achievement.

Leaders use staff training effectively so that staff have the expertise that they need to fulfil their roles. Staff appreciate the time that has been allocated to develop and refine their teaching. During a period of change, staff have benefited from the clear vision and direction

set by leaders. Staff are grateful for the consideration that leaders give to their workload and wellbeing. Staff are proud to work at the school.

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

Pupils are happy at Bury Church of England High School. Each morning, pupils are greeted by staff. The 'meet and greet' helps pupils to start the day positively. Pupils who are new to the school settle in quickly. This includes those who arrive after the start of the school year. Pupils are clear that it does not matter who you are or where you come from, everyone is welcome at the school.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. They know that if they share a worry with a member of staff, they will get the help they need. This contributes to pupils feeling safe. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that if it happens it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are confident. They talk about their school with pride. Pupils greet visitors maturely. They are keen to share what they are learning and make visitors feel welcome. Most pupils attend school regularly. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend school as regularly as they could.

Pupils behave calmly and respectfully throughout the school day. This ensures learning takes place uninterrupted. Pupils, typically, benefit from effective teaching. This helps them to learn the ambitious curriculum that has been planned. Pupils enjoy learning. Generally, pupils achieve well. This means, on the whole, they are ready for the next stage of learning. Pupils who face barriers to their learning are usually supported to achieve well due to the adaptations made to learning.

Pupils benefit from a rich and impactful personal development offer. They take part in a wide range of activities. These support their wider development and help pupils develop new interests. For example, they participate in Manga club, chess club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the consistency of teaching across the school so that pupils can learn the ambitious curriculum that has been planned and achieve well.
- Leaders should continue to develop strategies to improve rates of attendance, in particular for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Bishop Fraser Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tuesday Humby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lesley Durosomo.

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, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with members of the interim executive board. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority and the diocese.

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:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2024 .

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions. Both of which are unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up their role in April 2026.

Headteacher: Dr Suzanne Wrigley

Lead inspector:

Neil Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alison Davies, Ofsted Inspector

Craig Yates, Ofsted Inspector

John Cowper, Ofsted Inspector

Scott Fletcher, 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

827

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: 1,067

School capacity

810

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.01%

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

4.11%

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

19.11%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

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)	52.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.3%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	49.1	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47.6	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.31	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.21	-0.03	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' 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)	38.7%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.4%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	38.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.2	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)	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.53	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' 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)	38.7%	53.1%	-14.4 pp
2023/24 (final)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	30.4%	52.4%	-22.0 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)	38.9	50.4	-11.5
2023/24 (final)	37.9	50.0	-12.2
2022/23 (final)	36.2	50.3	-14.1

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)	-0.72	0.16	-0.88
2022/23 (final)	-0.53	0.17	-0.70

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)	97%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	98%	93%	Above

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)	8.4%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	9.0%	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)	20.8%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	21.2%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.1%	26.5%	Close to average

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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