

Bidston Village CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Address: Ballantyne Drive, Bidston, Prenton, Merseyside, CH43 7XG

Unique reference number (URN): 131281

Inspection report: 12 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff build warm, trusting relationships with children in the early years. Care practices ensure the youngest children are safe and secure. Leaders have an accurate understanding of children's starting points and use this information to shape the curriculum.

Communication and language, alongside personal, social and emotional development, sit at the heart of the early years curriculum. Stories, rhymes and songs form part of children's daily routine. Staff model new vocabulary effectively, for example when exploring minibeads or introducing the sound of the week. High-quality interactions and clear modelling of positive behaviours support children's development and learning.

The curriculum is well designed and builds progressively. The learning environment is purposeful, well resourced and inviting. A wide range of learning activities, some based around independent play and others led by adults, promote children's curiosity.

Children in the reception class take part in daily phonics sessions. These structured lessons strengthen early reading skills, and most children apply their sounds with growing confidence. Leaders establish clear routines, and behaviour is generally settled. Staff know children's needs well and adapt the provision effectively. These adaptations support disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to social care. Consequently, pupils take part fully in their learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders set a clear and inclusive vision that places pupils' pastoral needs alongside their learning. The school's positive ethos helps pupils feel a deep sense of belonging. Leaders have strengthened the systems used to identify and assess pupils' individual needs. Staff receive information about pupils' barriers quickly, and this helps them to adapt learning so that pupils who need extra help receive it.

When pupils require more specialised provision, leaders work closely with families and external professionals to ensure this happens. This is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), both in mainstream classes and in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.

Systems to review pupils' progress help leaders to identify any changing needs and set appropriate individual targets. Leaders provide training to develop staff expertise in a range of strategies to support pupils. They check how well staff use these agreed approaches and evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or known to social care. However, some pupils still face barriers that are not fully overcome. Leaders know that further work is needed to ensure all pupils benefit equally from the support available.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced several leadership changes. In a relatively short time, leaders have gained a detailed understanding of the school's context, its strengths and the areas that need improvement. They know what needs to be done and take appropriate action to drive improvement at pace. Their decisions are firmly rooted in the best interests of pupils. School improvement priorities are well identified and carefully considered. Leaders have focused their efforts where change is most needed. Leaders recognise that some curriculum content still requires refinement so that it more closely matches pupils' current needs.

Staff benefit from a continuous programme of professional development. They value the time given to work with specialists to develop their practice. They also appreciate opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from other schools, which helps them share in what is working well.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's context and the challenges faced in the community they serve. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Governors are ambitious for pupils and hold leaders to account for the actions they take to improve outcomes.

Most staff are proud to work at the school. They value the strong sense of teamwork and the opportunities they have to improve their skills. Staff feel listened to and appreciated. They welcome leaders' consideration of their wellbeing and workload. Those in the early stages of their careers speak positively about the support they receive.

Leaders continue to develop positive relationships with parents and the community to support pupils' needs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They understand the barriers that some pupils face and the gaps in their lived experiences. Leaders plan the curriculum carefully to address these. Pastoral support is effective. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly when they need help. This helps pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Leaders ensure that pupils' wellbeing sits at the heart of the school's work.

The programme for personal, social and health education begins in the early years and develops as pupils move up through school. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent, personal safety and how to manage peer pressure. They understand how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, using strategies such as breathing techniques and reducing screen time. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and offline, including what to do if they feel in danger.

Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and can explain how these apply in life. They make clear links between the country's democratic processes and voting for their pupil parliament. Pupils understand equality and fairness and learn about a range of religions and cultures. This helps them to develop respect and understanding for

others. Leaders ensure the programme is inclusive so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access it fully.

The personal development programme is enriched through well-planned visits and visitors. A visit to Chester deepens pupils' understanding of the Romans, while residential trips build independence and broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities. Leaders remove barriers so that all pupils can take part. Taking part in new activities helps pupils to develop their interests. These opportunities build pupils' resilience, confidence and perseverance.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, the school's published results show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below national averages. This means some older pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education. However, recent improvements to the curriculum are strengthening pupils' foundational knowledge. Standards are beginning to rise. By the end of Year 1, more pupils meet nationally expected standards in the phonics screening check. By Year 4, most pupils achieve well in the national multiplication tables check. Recent improvements to how handwriting is taught are beginning to make a difference.

Across the curriculum, pupils show an improving grasp of key ideas and take pride in their work. Disadvantaged pupils, those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care receive support that helps them make steady progress from their starting points. However, because the quality of teaching has been variable, some pupils still have gaps in their learning. Leaders are addressing these quickly so that all pupils are increasingly better prepared for future learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Despite leaders' sustained efforts, pupils' rates of attendance remain low, including for those who are disadvantaged. Too many pupils miss school through persistent absences. Leaders monitor attendance closely and treat it as a high priority. They promote regular attendance through newsletters, assemblies and rewards. Staff work with families and external agencies to remove barriers that hinder pupils from attending regularly. For pupils who struggle the most, staff build small, achievable steps to help them return to school with confidence. Where appropriate support is in place, attendance has improved for some pupils. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed to secure sustained improvement for all.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is typically calm and orderly. Staff make suitable adaptations for pupils who find it difficult to conduct themselves positively, helping them regulate and engage in learning. Leaders work with staff and external agencies to ensure that the right support is in place. Around school, pupils move purposefully and respectfully, greeting adults and each other politely. In lessons, most pupils generally show positive

attitudes to learning. Incidents of bullying or discrimination are rare. Leaders deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the curriculum is taught. They know that the quality of teaching varies and that some lessons do not meet pupils' needs well enough. At times, activities do not match pupils' starting points. Some tasks rely on complex vocabulary that pupils may not have grasped. This makes it harder for some pupils to access new learning securely.

From the Nursery Year onwards, the curriculum emphasises developing children's language and vocabulary. Leaders know that many children have low starting points when they join the school and seek to address this. They prioritise teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Phonics teaching is secure and well matched to pupils' needs.

The revised curriculum is logically thought out so that new learning builds on what pupils already know. Most staff revisit prior learning regularly. However, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge from earlier in the curriculum. Leaders are working on addressing these more quickly. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is generally effective, although some inconsistencies remain in how adeptly teachers support pupils with SEND in mainstream classes.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly school, where warm and respectful relationships help them feel safe and valued. They say that everyone is welcome. Pupils trust adults to support them with their learning and wellbeing, which helps them feel that they belong. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, take part fully in school life. Staff know their needs well.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They act quickly when pupils face difficulties or barriers. Even so, pupils' achievement over time has not been secure enough. The recently introduced curriculum is helping pupils to gain the knowledge they need, and this is beginning to make a difference. Older pupils, who did not benefit from this curriculum earlier on in their schooling, still have gaps in their basic skills, and this slows their progress.

Most pupils behave well. Classrooms are calm and pupils are generally keen to learn. When pupils struggle to manage their emotions, staff support them to make positive choices. Pupils say that bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in school and in the community. They are generally kind and considerate towards each other.

Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. Pastoral staff work closely with families to reduce the barriers that some pupils face, and this is helping attendance to improve for

some. However, a significant number of pupils continue to miss too much school, which affects their learning.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities the school provides beyond the classroom. Educational visits, visitors and residential experiences broaden their understanding of the wider world. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, such as baking, boxing and Makaton, which help them develop resilience and explore new interests.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by addressing gaps in foundational knowledge so that all pupils secure the skills they need to achieve well.
 - Leaders should refine the curriculum so that it more closely matches pupils' needs and supports sustained gains in their achievement.
 - Leaders should continue to focus on pupils' attendance so that more pupils attend routinely and persistent absence reduces.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors is Elizabeth Iddon.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and several other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinators, during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also spoke with a representative of the diocese and of the local authority. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout. They also spoke to some parents, carers and staff.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mina Shahi

Lead inspector:

Pat Speed, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Gill Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Karen Morris, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Ward, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

421

Above 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

420

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

68.39%

Well 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

7.13%

Well 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.23%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	27%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	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	46%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	39%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	46%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	39%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	37%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	30%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	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	27%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	25%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	26%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30%	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	46%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	45%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	58%	Below

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	38%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	49%	59%	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 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	27%	68%	-41 pp
2024/25 (final)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	26%	67%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	30%	66%	-36 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	46%	80%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	80%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	78%	-22 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	45%	78%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	78%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	78%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	77%	-33 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	38%	80%	-41 pp
2024/25 (final)	35%	81%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	79%	-47 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	49%	79%	-30 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)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.9%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.0%	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 (3 term)	22.6%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	22.7%	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.

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