

Carnforth School

Address: Carnforth Drive, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR4 9HG

Unique reference number (URN): 143416

Inspection report: 17 March 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

Early years

Strong standard 

Children make a very successful start to their education at Carnforth. Staff demonstrate high levels of care for all children. They know children's strengths on an individual basis. The curriculum builds step-by-step to ensure that children move forward and are stretched academically. Leaders have deliberately and carefully designed the learning environment to maximise the learning opportunities for the children.

Leaders set firm but fair expectations for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff adapt learning and resources effectively, so that children are included fully in all activities. As a result, children make quick progress from their starting points.

Reading is prioritised, and skilled phonics teaching contributes to secure progress, including for disadvantaged children. Where necessary, targeted interventions help children to catch up. Leaders model teaching, coach colleagues and share expertise. Staff model how to use vocabulary well when interacting with children. They use ambitious language including when reading high-quality books and talking about the activities that children are taking part in. Staff encourage children to find out new things to take their learning even further.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is vital. Leaders communicate clearly and effectively with parents regularly. This helps children to settle into school life successfully.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils progress well from their starting points. In the early years, children make a quick start to learning and acquire the foundations of early reading and number. Teaching of early reading and phonics is particularly successful. Across reading, writing and mathematics, pupils generally achieve in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6, and some pupils reach the higher standards. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those pupils known to children's social care, generally achieve well. Teachers adapt the curriculum to help them to learn and remember more.

Pupils typically make ambitious word choices, and apply vocabulary that they have been taught in their discussions and written work. Pupils talk about their learning confidently, such as in history when discussing Oliver Cromwell and the royalists of King Charles, and when sharing their interest about World War II.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved attendance rates for many different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is also reducing. Leaders follow the helpful advice and guidance from the trust to ensure that

any barriers to attendance are removed. Leaders recognise there is more to do to continue to ensure that attendance rates are in line with the national average. This is because leaders have a deep understanding of their local context. They take this information into consideration when supporting individual families. As a result, this work has the desired impact and most pupils are keen to be in school and learn alongside their friends.

Pupils' behaviour reflects the care and warmth that staff model. The professional relationships between staff and pupils are highly respectful. Staff apply the school's behaviour expectations clearly and support pupils to behave well at every opportunity. Leaders help pupils to understand their emotions and to know how to manage tricky situations more positively. Poor behaviour is quickly addressed and bullying is not tolerated. Staff provide effective support for pupils beyond the classroom to focus pupils on their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They regularly monitor how well pupils are learning in order to evaluate the school's strengths. From this, they target staff training accordingly to improve teaching further.

Leaders have designed a well-considered curriculum that reflects their high expectations. The teaching of early reading and writing is secure. Children in Reception quickly learn letter names and sounds. Most of the time, teachers explain new ideas clearly. They demonstrate suitable subject knowledge and deploy this during their class teaching.

Typically, staff teach the curriculum well. For example, teachers have broken the learning down into small steps to help pupils to understand new knowledge and connect it to their prior knowledge. However, at times, teachers do not identify pupils' errors in learning as swiftly as they could and so opportunities for learning are missed. Overall, pupils build knowledge gradually over time.

Teachers understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Teachers also support pupils experiencing disadvantage to keep up with their peers. Teachers adapt teaching and resources to meet these pupils' needs successfully.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise the learning of pupils who may face barriers to their learning from the outset. Leaders have a clear understanding of the community that they serve. This underpins the decisions that they make. The school ensures that pupils routinely receive the help that they need to learn successfully. Leaders have ensured that additional funding maximises the support that children receive over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other barriers to their learning are well supported by the school. Their needs are quickly identified. Teachers use a range of assessments to better understand any gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders review support plans regularly and adjust them as necessary. Most pupils fully access the curriculum alongside their peers. Teachers use a range of adaptations to the curriculum and resources to support pupils within class. For example, teachers use tools

such as visual aids and word mats to help pupils to learn. Generally, these adaptations successfully enable pupils to learn. Support staff are often effectively deployed to help these pupils to learn. As a result of this support, pupils progress with their learning.

Teachers have received training on how to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND are generally supported effectively to learn in lessons.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders carefully consider how to improve the outcomes of the most vulnerable pupils. They work thoughtfully with a range of external services and experts. This has provided the school with clear pathways for improvements and helped leaders to refine the curriculum.

Governors and trust leaders have clear oversight of the school. They work with leaders to shape school improvement and ensure that the school is improving in the right areas. They ask the right questions to challenge and support school leaders. Trust leaders have built a carefully planned and layered approach to training and coaching strategies that supports all teachers and leaders to develop their practice. This ensures that all pupils receive a high-quality education.

Staff benefit from a well-considered programme of professional learning so that they have the skills and expertise needed. Leaders aim to help all staff to grow professionally. They consider staff workload when making any decisions that may affect staff. The wellbeing of staff is a high priority for leaders.

The school has established positive working relationships with parents and carers. Leaders go the extra mile to engage with parents and carers to involve them in the learning of their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise the education of the whole child at Carnforth. Pupils benefit from a coherent and well-planned personal development programme. Leaders have carefully considered the local community and context within their curriculum planning. For example, all pupils learn about river safety and how to stay safe in person and online. Pupils learn about relationships and health education in an age-appropriate way. Pupils discuss maturely the topics that they have learned.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their social and cultural awareness. Pupils learn about the importance of human rights and the differences that make us unique. Most pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils learn about voting and democracy, including through participation in school council elections. Most pupils' sense of right and wrong develops securely. Pupils benefit from the impact of leadership roles across the school. These include peer mentoring, where pupils support one another. As a result of this, pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain and they are ready for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils love the outdoor play that is a vital part of the school's approach. Pupils learn to cooperate and take calculated risks in their play. They resolve any problems that arise,

usually doing so thoughtfully as they develop conflict resolution skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with other barriers to learning are fully included in all activities. Leaders track pupils' participation in clubs and engagement with the wider range of activities on offer. They ensure the school's approach removes barriers to participation for the most vulnerable pupils. This ensures that pupils experience opportunities fully, including those who are disadvantaged. These activities include residential visits that build pupils' confidence and independence.

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

Pupils receive a warm welcome from staff each day at the school and feel part of the community. Pupils share an understanding of the importance of learning. They generally listen well in lessons. Pupils feel safe. Outdoors, pupils love the range of play equipment that the school provides. This enables pupils to make the most of breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils cooperate with their peers and other pupils across all year groups. Pupils say that bullying is uncommon and always quickly resolved. Pupils are happy to attend school and attendance is improving over time due to the hard work of the pastoral team.

Children learn rapidly from the beginning of the early years. Teachers organise engaging activities, such as kite making, to entice children to play and learn. Children listen intently to engaging story time. They learn to read effectively from the beginning of school.

Most pupils achieve well and perform in line with national averages in national testing. They discuss their learning and favourite pieces of work with interest.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing are well cared for. Teachers adapt the curriculum and their lessons to address these pupils' needs. Leaders understand pupils' individual needs; they are included in all aspects of school life.

The school organises a wide variety of visits and experiences for children. These enrich pupils' understanding of the curriculum and beyond. Pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6 appreciate the residential visits that they go on. These visits help them to build their independence and develop social skills. Pupils are typically well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should sustain the improvements in attendance rates by continuing to analyse patterns closely, acting promptly where concerns arise and working with families whose children are persistently absent.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen teachers' use of assessment to understand where pupils have made errors in to order to address gaps in pupils' learning.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Black Pear Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Emma Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Shoesmith.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors met with members of Black Pear Trust. They held meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers and pupils.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mr Paul Prigg

Lead inspector:

Rob Matthews, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Steph Withington, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Large, 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

184

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

School capacity

210

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

57.32%

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

3.26%

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

17.93%

Close to 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)

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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	39%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	74%	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	66%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	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 (revised)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

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	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	28%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	65%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	60%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	44%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	58%	Close to average

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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	39%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	69%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	28%	67%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	66%	-4 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	80%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	78%	-16 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	60%	78%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	78%	-33 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	69%	77%	-9 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	79%	81%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	39%	79%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	81%	79%	2 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 (2 term)	5.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.0%	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 (2 term)	20.7%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	30.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	32.9%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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