

Edgar Wood Academy

Address: Heywood Old Road, Heywood, OL10 2QN

Unique reference number (URN): 148596

Inspection report: 2 June 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically progress well through the curriculum in each subject. Over time, most pupils build knowledge securely and this is reflected in the high-quality work that they produce. Pupils with additional barriers to their learning benefit from effective support to help them to learn the curriculum successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils currently in Year 11 are the first pupils through the school. Leaders have taken thoughtful action to ensure that staff have the expertise needed to prepare these pupils for success in their GCSE examinations. For instance, staff have had suitable training and support, both from within the trust and from external specialists, to ensure that they are knowledgeable about GCSE assessment and examination criteria.

Leaders swiftly identify any gaps in pupils' reading, writing or mathematics knowledge. Pupils are supported particularly well to improve their reading and mathematics. Leaders' work to ensure that pupils have the skills required to write well is beginning to embed. However, difficulties with writing persist for a small number of pupils.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised increasing pupils' attendance. This is bearing fruit. Thorough tracking and monitoring enables leaders to intervene quickly to reduce any emerging barriers that hinder pupils from attending school regularly. As a result, over time, pupils' attendance is rising. Rates of persistent absenteeism have fallen markedly. The school has a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The attendance of these pupils is in line with the national average for this group and continues to increase. Similarly, the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with their peers nationally. However, overall rates of attendance are still not high enough. Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should.

Leaders' deliberate and thoughtful actions to establish a calm and orderly environment have paid dividends. This is reflected in the noteworthy reduction in suspensions in this academic year, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders explicitly teach pupils both how they should behave during the school day and the reasons why their behaviour matters. As leaders have successfully improved the school, so pupils have come to enjoy being there and to value their education. In lessons, learning typically proceeds with little interruption. Most pupils are attentive to staff and respectful towards each other. Any instances of bullying or discriminatory language are resolved decisively by staff.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Following a period of turbulence in staffing, leaders have now established stability. Pupils currently experience continuity of teaching by staff who are knowledgeable about their subjects. Leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They use this to inform staff deployment and to shape the professional learning programme. As a

result, despite a large number of new staff, including some who are at the early stages of their teaching career, teaching is typically effective.

Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious and logically ordered. The school's agreed approach to learning, the 'Edgar Wood Way', is embedded. In the main, staff use these teaching strategies effectively. For instance, pupils with any barriers to their learning are generally supported well to access the curriculum. Similarly, staff regularly check whether pupils have secured the intended learning. However, at times, some staff do not adjust their teaching in response to these checks. Consequently, some instances of misunderstood learning are not addressed as swiftly as they could be.

Leaders know which pupils need additional help to develop their reading, writing or numeracy knowledge. These pupils benefit from suitable support. That said, leaders' actions to support pupils who have difficulty with their writing are at an earlier stage. Some pupils have not received the help that they need to secure this knowledge in a timely way.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised ensuring that all pupils are known and valued. This helps pupils to feel a deep sense of belonging to the school community.

Recently, leaders have taken effective action to strengthen their approach to identifying any additional barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing. This includes any special educational needs and/or disabilities that pupils may have. As a result, leaders quickly spot those pupils who need extra help. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of the support that they provide, to ensure that it is effective. In the main, pupils benefit from suitable support to help overcome any barriers to their learning or wellbeing.

The school has a high proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged. Leaders have ensured that support for these pupils is woven through the school's daily routines and teaching strategies. As such, leaders have aligned their use of additional funding with the school's wider priorities. The impact of this is beginning to be seen. For example, leaders have reduced the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Leaders make judicious use of alternative provision, for example to re-engage pupils in their education. Leaders have a thorough oversight of the effectiveness of this provision to ensure that it is in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, those responsible for governance have taken decisive and effective action to ensure that they have the expertise needed to raise standards in the school. School leaders have worked closely with the trust and the local governing body to make improvements. The impact of leaders' actions is evident across all aspects of provision.

Leaders have a highly accurate understanding of what the school does well and where further improvement is needed. This informs careful prioritisation of actions and astute

decision-making, with pupils at the heart. Bolstered by clear support and effective challenge from the trust and governors, the school is going from strength to strength.

Leaders have successfully stabilised staffing. They have thought carefully about how to ensure that staff have suitable expertise, despite the school having a high proportion of new staff, including some who are at the early stage of their teaching career. A comprehensive programme of professional development, which aligns closely to the school's improvement priorities, ensures that staff typically receive the support that they need to teach well. Despite a time of much change, staff are overwhelmingly positive about their experience of working at the school. They appreciate the improvements that leaders have made, which have had a favourable impact on their workload and wellbeing.

In the main, parents and carers are positive about the school. However, a few remain concerned about some aspects of provision and whether improvements will be sustained. Leaders are continuing to engage with parents to help them to understand the reasons for, and impact of, their actions to improve the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a comprehensive programme for personal development and wellbeing. They have carefully considered the knowledge, skills and experiences that pupils should acquire during their time in school. This ranges from securing an understanding of democracy and healthy relationships, to developing the oracy skills needed to express their opinions and acquiring the confidence to greet adults with a handshake.

Important learning, such as how pupils can keep themselves safe in the local community and when online, is taught through the school's curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. This learning is subsequently reinforced through assemblies and during form time which helps to ensure that, in the main, pupils remember this important information well. Leaders ensure that the PSHE curriculum is responsive to issues that arise either locally or nationally. For instance, pupils have learned about the dangers of knife crime and toxic masculinity. This helps to ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders encourage pupils to engage in activities that enable them to nurture their talents and explore new interests. For instance, there is a wide array of extra-curricular activities for pupils to choose from, including darts club and opportunities to learn musical instruments. Leaders take thoughtful action to reduce any barriers to participation for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders are determined to raise pupils' aspirations and to help them to better understand the value of education. To this end, leaders provide pupils with a wealth of information about the routes that they can take into employment, training or education when they leave school. Older pupils particularly appreciate work experience opportunities which help to develop their understanding of different professions and the world of work. Offering thoughtful additional support when needed, leaders have ensured that Year 11 pupils are equipped to make well-informed and ambitious choices about their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

Pupils are delighted by the improvements that leaders have recently made to the school. In particular, pupils appreciate that staffing has stabilised and many cited their teachers as the best thing about school. Warm and positive interactions between staff and pupils begin when pupils line up in the morning and continue throughout the day. Pupils feel listened to and supported. They trust that staff will not give up on them. Pupils, including the high proportion who are disadvantaged, feel a clear sense of belonging. They are increasingly proud to be part of this school community.

Most pupils respond positively to the clear boundaries that leaders have established for their behaviour. Well-established routines, enforced with warmth, help pupils know what to expect. As staffing has stabilised and the quality of the curriculum and teaching has improved, so pupils have become increasingly invested in their education. In the main, they progress well through the curriculum. Classrooms are typically calm and orderly places where pupils can get on with the job of learning. Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in their increasing rates of attendance.

Staff are adept at identifying any additional support that pupils might need and ensuring that appropriate help is at hand. This helps pupils to overcome any barriers that might impede their engagement in learning, or prevent them from benefitting fully from all that the school offers. For instance, many pupils relish opportunities to go on trips, perform in the school production or attend extra-curricular clubs, including skateboarding and chess.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to work with leaders to influence further change in the school. For instance, the junior leadership team were consulted about changes to the school's mobile phone policy. Pupils embrace leadership roles that enable them to support their peers, including as anti-bullying ambassadors and behaviour mentors. They take pride in helping to shape a culture of tolerance and support, in which pupils are free to be themselves and bullying is not tolerated.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed effective use of assessment strategies, so that staff use assessment information to inform their teaching consistently well.
 - Leaders should continue to embed strategies for improving pupils' handwriting, so that pupils can communicate fluently and effectively in writing across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue to implement their strategy to reduce any ongoing barriers to pupils' attendance, so that the number of pupils who attend school regularly continues to increase.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Altus Education Partnership 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), Richard Ronksley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jock Rodger.

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

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority, a group of trustees, the CEO and representatives of the local governing body.

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 makes use of four alternative provisions, including three that are unregistered.

A large number of leaders and staff have joined the school since the last inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2024.

The school opened in September 2021 for pupils in Year 7 only. Each year, the number of pupils on the school roll has increased. From September 2025, the school has had pupils from Years 7 to Year 11 in attendance.

Headteacher: Paul Jones

Lead inspector:

Sally Rix, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alexia Barnes Gargrave, Ofsted Inspector

Steve Coyle, Ofsted Inspector

Claire Hallwood, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

637

Well 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

900

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)

45.53%

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: 28.9%

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

3.77%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.81%

Close to 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).

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)	9.7%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.5%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.3%	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)	30.7%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	36.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.5%	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.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright