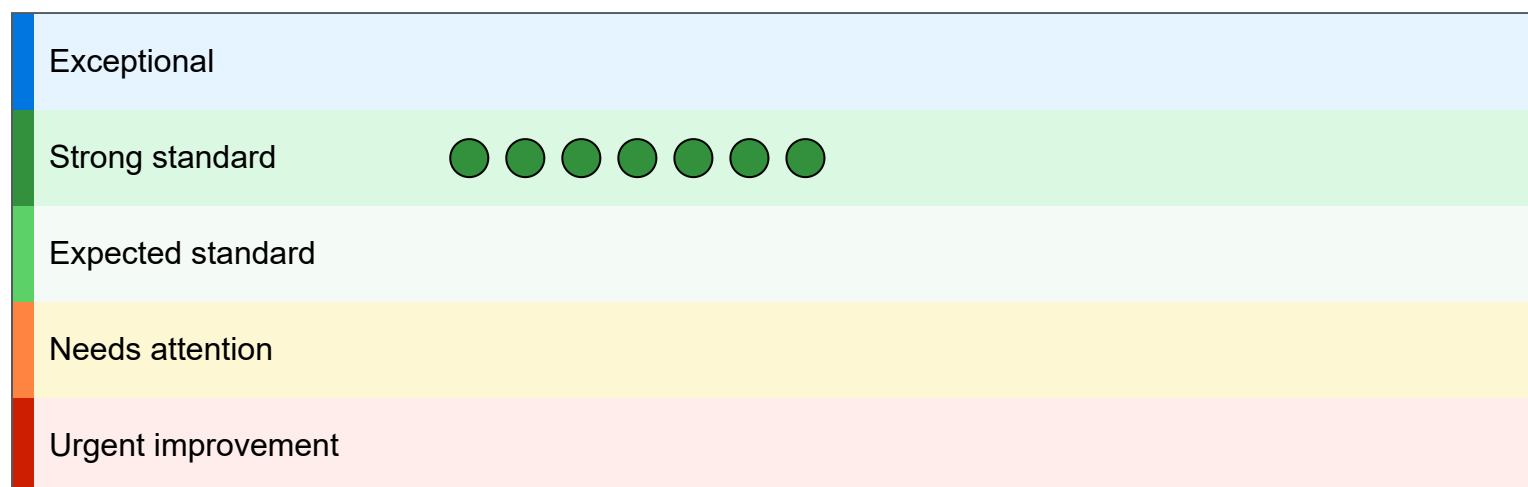


Great Sankey Primary School

Address: Great Sankey Primary School, WA5 1SB

Unique reference number (URN): 144798

Inspection report: 25 November 2025



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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils do very well in national tests and across the wider curriculum at this school. Well-established systems routinely identify how well pupils are doing. Wherever pupils may fall behind, detailed analysis leads to bespoke adaptations to their learning. Pupils soon catch up. Pupils develop the foundational knowledge that they need to do well now and in the future.

The school focuses particularly well on removing any barriers to learning. The school is relentless in their focus on supporting all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to social care and those who are disadvantaged. When there have been dips in progress, the school acts swiftly. Pupils do very well from their starting points. They are consistently well prepared for their next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

The school makes sure that pupils and parents and carers understand the importance of attending school regularly. When absence increases, the school works collaboratively with families to understand the individual barriers to good attendance. Bespoke adaptations bring about rapid improvements. Innovative approaches, such as “wake-up, shake-up Wednesday”, motivate pupils to attend promptly. Pupils love coming to this school and attendance is high.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils to behave well throughout the school. The school culture is characterised by respect, attentiveness and positive engagement. The school has adopted clear routines that are commonly understood by pupils and by staff. For example, the use of non-verbal signals and gestures ensures that pupils settle well and participate fully in lessons. This means that the environment is highly conducive to learning.

Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for one another. They are patient of, and attentive to, each other. They learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviours. When there may be a disagreement, this is resolved quickly and pupils adapt their behaviours independently. They understand the importance of being respectful of each other's thoughts and feeling. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated. Older pupils act as positive role models to others. Pupils thrive in this caring and calm environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

The school's curriculum is of high quality. Leaders regularly check how effectively teachers are teaching and how well pupils are progressing. Leaders have an astute understanding of the implementation and impact of its curriculum. They are swift to make any necessary changes to strengthen the curriculum further. Any decisions made are rooted in high-quality research and evidence. There is a consistent approach to teaching. Pupils receive the support that they need and do well.

Teachers routinely check how well pupils are doing. This means that pupils get the support that they need promptly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is tailored to the needs of all pupils with SEND. This effective practice is embedded throughout the school.

Teachers focus intently on ensuring that all pupils develop their foundational skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff expertise in phonics is strong. Pupils learn to read fluently. The curriculum is rich in language. Teachers consistently encourage pupils to explain their learning using ambitious vocabulary. Teachers and pupils engage in high-quality interactions. For example, pupils talk with confidence about their learning in geography. They debate and explore where the best place would be, should they need to shelter from a disaster.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders are ambitious to ensure that children have the very best start to their education. They have a clear understanding of the context and starting points of children. Learning is astutely tailored to the needs of all children. The school works closely with other professional bodies to ensure that what they do is right for their children. All leaders keep a keen eye on how well children do and how well the learning environment supports children's development. Adult interactions with children are of high quality. These enable children to develop a wide vocabulary. Where children are more reluctant to engage, adults skilfully encourage them. This results in an inclusive, ambitious and nurturing provision that supports all groups of children and successfully promotes their progress in all areas of learning.

The school places a high regard on reading. It ensures that children quickly learn to read. Quality texts support children's knowledge and enjoyment of reading. The school ensures that children develop the foundational knowledge they need to be good learners. Parents and carers feel like 'partners' and work well with the school to mutually support their children. Children make a really strong start to this school. They achieve well, develop high levels of independence and are fully ready for their next steps.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

This school is highly committed to inclusion. It ensures that all pupils, regardless of background or need, are able to participate fully, make progress and feel valued within the learning environment. Staff support is used purposefully to enhance learning, promote inclusion and build a supportive peer community. This consistently enhances the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged pupils in the school.

The school has carefully considered the needs of all pupils. This includes those with a special educational need and/or disability, those who are disadvantaged and those who speak English as an additional language. It seeks out the most up-to-date and appropriate training for its staff. This means that staff are well equipped to support pupils well within the classroom and beyond. Teachers skilfully tailor learning activities to individual needs. Leaders rigorously check the impact of this training. Wherever the school feels extra help is needed for pupils, it works closely with other agencies to provide it.

The school is highly committed to ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively. The use of it, and impact of any strategies, are rigorously explored and evaluated by all leaders, including governors. Disadvantaged pupils do well at this school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

The school has high expectations for its pupils, staff and community to do well. These expectations are realised. This is particularly the case for the most disadvantaged pupils, including those with a special educational need and/or disability and those known to social care. Leaders at all levels ensure that they know the school well. They reflect carefully on all of its work. Well-crafted systems identify what is working well and what is not. The school responds swiftly to information gathered. Any necessary improvements are rapid. The culture of high expectations and professionalism is evident. As a result, pupils thrive.

All staff feel part of the process of improvement. Well-considered staff development enables staff to support the progress of the school and improve themselves as professionals. There is a strong sense of unity and direction. One parent and carer, expressing views typical of many, stated that there is, 'a real community spirit'.

Governors understand the school well and ensure it meets its statutory duties. They are active in ensuring that the school's strategic priorities are appropriate and that pupils do well. They regularly challenge and support leaders, making sure that the school continues to improve. There is a restlessness among all leaders to get things right and for pupils to excel.

Personal development and well-being

Strong standard 

This school is passionate about ensuring that all of its pupils are prepared to be active citizens, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The personal development curriculum is well considered for the school's context. For example, it teaches pupils about human migration and refugees and how this is relevant to their context and wider society. Pupils are very supported in building their understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils talk with a great sense of pride about the roles that they take on within the school. Play leaders and prefects have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the need to act as positive role models. The school has a wide range of after-school clubs, including keyboard, quidditch, choir and cross country.

The curriculum ensures that pupils develop a deep understanding of tolerance and respect. For example, pupils talk with great maturity about different religions and cultures. They explain that understanding others' faiths helps them to become better citizens. This demonstrates great character.

The school is systematic in ensuring that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online. This includes developing healthy relationships with one another as they grow up. The well-designed, appropriate approach to relationships and sex education and health education supports pupils' wider development very effectively. High-quality

pastoral support also enables pupils to understand themselves. This impacts significantly upon the lives of those who receive it. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps.

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

Every pupil is valued, cared for and thrives at Great Sankey Primary School. At the start of each school day, pupils are welcomed into a calm, nurturing and friendly environment, where they feel safe and ready to learn. Staff build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and their families. This creates a culture of respect, where pupils are confident that they can share any worries they may have with staff who will listen and help them.

Well-established routines and high expectations ensure that pupils' behaviour is consistently positive. Children are proud to be 'experts' in the early years, helping others with their learning. They thrive on becoming 'star of the week'. Older pupils strive to earn house points for trying their best. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They are confident that staff will stop any unkind behaviour swiftly. Pupils' attendance is high because of strong pastoral care and tailored support.

Pupils enjoy their learning and take great pride in their work. Lessons are highly engaging and matched well to pupils' needs. Any barriers to pupils' learning are identified and acted upon successfully. Staff adapt lessons to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can succeed. Pupils achieve well and often exceed national outcomes. They are prepared very well for their next stages of education.

In the early years, children get off to a flying start. They are happy, settled and curious learners. The curriculum is language rich and thoughtfully sequenced, with a strong focus on early reading and writing. Staff interactions are warm and purposeful, helping children to build vocabulary and independence.

Beyond the classroom, pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment opportunities, including gardening, choir, sports and leadership roles. They are proud to contribute to their school and the wider community. Pupils develop the confidence, character and knowledge so that, as their school motto states, 'together we learn and grow'.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, 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.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Challenge Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Moorcroft, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Howard Platt.

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, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, early years leader, curriculum leader, the chief executive officer and representatives from the trust, governors and trustees and a range of teaching and non-teaching staff. They also spoke to a wide range of pupils throughout the school during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school joined the Challenge Education Trust in June 2017.

There has been a new headteacher since the previous inspection as the current headteacher was the head of school.

The school admits pupils from the age of 3 into its nursery.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

Headteacher: Lisa Wilding

Lead inspector:

Mark Anderson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kirsty Norbury, His Majesty's Inspector

Elliot Costas-Walker, Ofsted Inspector

Donna Chambers, His Majesty's 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

348

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: 272

School capacity

315

Close to 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)

12.38%

Below 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

1.15%

Below 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

4.02%
Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	80%	61%	Above
2024/25	78%	62%	Above
2023/24	79%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23	83%	60%	Above

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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25	87%	75%	Above
2023/24	83%	74%	Above
2022/23	89%	73%	Above

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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25	83%	72%	Above
2023/24	81%	72%	Above
2022/23	85%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	89%	73%	Above
2024/25	85%	74%	Above
2023/24	88%	73%	Above
2022/23	94%	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	46%	Above
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	75%	46%	Above
2022/23	71%	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	84%	62%	Above
2024/25	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	75%	62%	Above
2022/23	86%	60%	Above

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	79%	59%	Above
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	88%	58%	Above
2022/23	86%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	60%	Above
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24	88%	59%	Above
2022/23	71%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	68%	68%	1 pp
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24	75%	67%	8 pp
2022/23	71%	66%	5 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	84%	80%	5 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	75%	80%	-5 pp
2022/23	86%	78%	7 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	79%	78%	1 pp
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	88%	78%	10 pp
2022/23	86%	77%	8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	88%	79%	8 pp
2022/23	71%	79%	-8 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 (1 term)	3.6%	5.1%	Below
2023/24	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.0%	5.9%	Below

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 (1 term)	9.8%	14.3%	Below
2023/24	7.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	6.7%	16.2%	Below

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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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