

Gayton Primary School

Address: Gayton Road, Heswall, Wirral, Wirral, Merseyside, CH60 8PZ

Unique reference number (URN): 149493

Inspection report: 20 January 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Published outcomes for this school indicate that pupils achieve highly. Results in national tests at the end of key stage 2, the Year 4 multiplication tables check and the phonics screening check are all above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils, though small in number, also achieve well. Leaders identify individual barriers precisely and provide targeted support that enables these pupils to keep pace with their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities gain detailed and secure knowledge, which they apply with increasing independence. This is because teaching meets their needs effectively. Any gaps in understanding are identified quickly and addressed through responsive teaching and well-designed interventions. As a result, these pupils continue to make strong progress across subjects.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They demonstrate secure knowledge in mathematics and writing, as well as fluent reading skills. Pupils also display the confidence needed to tackle new learning successfully.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have given sustained focus to securing high attendance for all pupils. They monitor attendance closely and analyse patterns precisely for individuals and groups. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff identify concerns early and act swiftly to support families. Leaders use this analysis to strengthen routines and remove barriers to attendance. Pupils are greeted warmly each morning, encouraging punctuality and reinforcing a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Where attendance is low for individual pupils, leaders put targeted plans in place. Evidence shows that these actions lead to clear and sustained improvement, with persistent absence reducing quickly once appropriate support and challenge begin.

Behaviour across the school is calm, respectful and consistently positive. Leaders have established clear routines and fostered a strong culture of belonging. The 'all crew, no passengers' ethos promotes shared responsibility and kindness. Staff apply behaviour policies consistently and with confidence. They know pupils well and respond to their needs with care and clarity. Discriminatory behaviour is rare and, when it occurs, is addressed immediately and effectively. Leaders act swiftly to ensure that concerns do not escalate or recur. Pupils demonstrate motivation and positive attitudes to learning across the school. They engage confidently, show self-control and contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious. It is broad and, across all subjects, clearly and consistently identifies the knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. The school ensures that pupils gain secure foundations in the fundamentals of

reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge they need to succeed in their next steps in learning.

Leaders make astute decisions to refine teaching and further improve the curriculum based on their insights. As a result, teaching is consistently of a high quality. Leaders ensure that teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use this to adapt lessons thoughtfully for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff make reasonable adjustments so that all pupils can access the curriculum successfully. These adaptations enable pupils to catch up quickly where gaps in knowledge emerge.

Early reading is prioritised through rigorous phonics teaching, enabling pupils to become fluent readers quickly. Many pupils develop a genuine love of reading. Teaching extends pupils' vocabulary effectively and strengthens spoken and written language across subjects. Lessons are engaging and purposeful, ensuring that many pupils achieve extremely well.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for giving the school's youngest children the best possible start. The curriculum in the early years is expertly designed and thoughtfully sequenced to develop communication, language and early literacy. Learning is brought to life through exciting themes, such as a London topic. During this learning, children produce detailed drawings and use watercolour paints. They create impressive replicas of landmarks, such as Big Ben, using a range of shapes and construction materials.

Reading is prioritised from the outset. Phonics is taught rigorously, and children practise and apply their skills through storytelling and well-planned role play. For example, children confidently take on roles such as driving a London bus. This helps them learn to take turns, share resources and communicate purposefully with others. Staff extend children's vocabulary through high-quality interaction and purposeful dialogue during play. Mathematics is introduced through practical exploration, number activities and real-life experiences that link meaningfully to the curriculum.

Staff work closely with parents to support pupils' learning at home and ensure timely help for disadvantaged children. Support is carefully matched to each child's needs and reviewed regularly. Children develop secure social, communication and self-regulation skills through consistent routines and language-rich provision. As a result, children leave Reception confident, articulate and well prepared for the more formal learning of Year 1. They are 'given wings' and 'ready to fly'.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders and staff demonstrate a deep understanding of pupils' needs. They act swiftly to identify and remove barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders have established a step-by-step approach that is embedded and consistently effective. Staff are well trained to understand pupils' needs, enabling them to adapt teaching skilfully and successfully. Targeted interventions are carefully delivered and have a sustained impact. Start-of-the-day activities help ensure that pupils are ready for learning.

Leaders rigorously monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that any gaps in learning close rapidly. The pupil premium strategy is sharply focused and underpinned by robust evidence. Leaders work proactively with families and a range of external agencies to secure the best outcomes for pupils, including those known to social care. This coherent approach reduces barriers for vulnerable pupils and ensures they receive the support they need to thrive.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They identify clear actions for further improvement and use evidence from their close monitoring to prioritise work that benefits pupils most. Leaders act promptly when improvement is needed and review the impact carefully.

Trustees know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties diligently. They ensure that resources are managed wisely and used to improve provision for all groups. Trustees and governors provide challenge and targeted support based on a secure understanding of the school's context. They use visits, reports and discussions to hold leaders to account effectively.

Leaders and trustees make decisions that place pupils' interests at the centre. They consider disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils known to social care thoughtfully. Support is adapted so that these pupils can learn successfully and feel safe in school.

Leaders provide a coherent professional development programme for all staff. Training is evidence-informed and builds subject expertise across the school. Leaders manage workload and wellbeing with care. They streamline marking, protect planning time, and respond to staff feedback consistently. Staff feel valued and supported. Together, leaders, trustees and staff drive sustained improvement that benefits all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing are clear strengths of the school. Leaders provide a programme that develops pupils' character, confidence and personal responsibility. The programme encourages pupils to reflect on their beliefs and experiences in thoughtful and respectful ways. Pupils learn to understand right and wrong and consider ethical issues with increasing maturity.

Teaching helps pupils to respect the values and viewpoints of others within the school community. Staff support pupils' social development through structured opportunities for cooperation. Outdoor activities encourage teamwork, negotiation and conflict resolution in active and engaging situations. The 'crew council' offers meaningful leadership roles that promote responsibility and belonging.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy, through practical experiences and age-appropriate discussions. They develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, heritage and creative expression through links with local artists.

The school provides a well-planned personal development and wellbeing curriculum, with a clear focus on emotional development. Pupils learn strategies to manage their emotions. They have access to safe spaces if they are needed.

Leaders ensure that the programme meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils through careful adaptation. Support is targeted and monitored so that all pupils benefit equally from the curriculum and wider opportunities.

Relationships, sex and health education are taught with clarity and sensitivity. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both online and offline. Teaching helps them to understand healthy relationships and make informed choices in real-life situations.

The school offers a broad range of enrichment opportunities beyond lessons, including clubs, community projects and creative events that extend pupils' interests. Staff, pupil, and parent and carer feedback shows that pupils feel valued, included and supported. Pupils demonstrate resilience, confidence and positive attitudes to school life. They contribute actively to the school community as responsible and thoughtful young citizens. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life beyond primary school.

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

Pupils at Gayton Primary School enter each day into a warm, nurturing and highly inclusive environment where they feel safe, valued and known as individuals. The school's strong family ethos is tangible from the moment pupils arrive. Staff welcome every child personally, setting a positive tone that reinforces a deep sense of belonging. Pupils speak with confidence about being listened to, supported and encouraged to be themselves. They develop exceptionally trusting relationships with adults, secure in the knowledge that someone will always respond if they need help. The school has a deep understanding of the barriers that some pupils face and how to reduce them.

Behaviour across the school is praiseworthy. Leaders have established a culture rooted in kindness, connection and personal responsibility, which pupils embrace wholeheartedly. Through the school's well-embedded conscious discipline approach, pupils skilfully manage their emotions, resolve difficulties with maturity and consistently make thoughtful choices. Calm, purposeful safe spaces in classrooms provide pupils with designated places to go in order to support their wellbeing. Highly developed outdoor resources ensure that playtimes are joyful and productive. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. Pupils are emphatic that staff act decisively and effectively when concerns arise.

Pupils take genuine pride in being part of their 'crew community', where teamwork, contribution and collective success are central. They relish the rich, thoughtfully designed curriculum and the wide range of opportunities that help them grow in confidence, resilience and social responsibility. As a result, pupils flourish academically, socially and emotionally, becoming compassionate, reflective and self-assured young people who are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps beyond primary school.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should continue to sustain the high effectiveness of their work across all areas. They should pursue ongoing improvement, addressing barriers and emerging challenges, so their actions have a transformational impact on all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and others who may face additional barriers to their learning and wellbeing.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Cheshire Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steven Ellis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Emlyn Wright.

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 and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the multi-academy trust's local governing committee, as well as a representative of the local authority.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher : Jennie McAleny

Lead inspector:

Helen Friend, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Keith Pullen, Ofsted Inspector

Ian Shackleton, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

219

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

230

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)

3.20%

Well 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

2.74%

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

8.22%

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 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		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	82%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	61%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (revised)	94%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	74%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	91%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	85%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	73%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘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 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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23		79%	

‘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 (2 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.8%	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 (2 term)	3.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.2%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.2%	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 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.

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