

Gawsworth Primary School

Address: Longbutts Lane, Gawsworth, Macclesfield, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9QU

Unique reference number (URN): 144833

Inspection report: 13 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 ●

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have set out ambitious and well-ordered curriculums across the school, enabling pupils to build knowledge securely over time. Leaders have an accurate oversight of the curriculum. They use this to shape the curriculum and prioritise areas for improvement. Leaders make sure that staff have the expertise they need to deliver the curriculum successfully. Staff design exciting lessons. They make deliberate choices about content and resources according to subjects and pupils' starting points. Staff are skilled in their teaching of phonics. Pupils in key stage 1 receive the teaching they need to secure essential skills in language, vocabulary, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in key stage 2 build on this essential knowledge. It enables them to successfully learn the breadth of the curriculum offer.

Staff deliver inclusive lessons that fully involve pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning. They skilfully adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs effectively. This includes supporting pupils who need to catch up quickly. Pupils are focused and immersed in their learning. They work collaboratively, with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations for children in the early years. Leaders have a deep understanding of early childhood development and have made deliberate, well-informed decisions about the curriculum. The curriculum is carefully sequenced into clear, progressive steps, with reading at its core. It is supported by regular checks on children's learning and development. All staff contribute to this assessment and identify next steps to ensure that children secure the intended knowledge, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those who face other barriers to learning. Skilled staff teach phonics effectively, ensuring children are well prepared for reading and writing in key stage 1 and beyond.

Staff have warm, nurturing relationships with children. High-quality interactions between staff and children support the development of oracy, language and vocabulary. Staff intentionally model vocabulary and engage specific children in meaningful conversations. These targeted interactions result in children keeping up with the curriculum and becoming confident communicators. The early years environment is stimulating, well organised and accessible. Children interact happily with each other and demonstrate increasing independence. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are well prepared for Year 1. Parents and carers are encouraged to play an active part in their child's learning. This helps to foster positive relationships with staff and in turn supports children's progress.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is a strength of this school. Leaders have made sure that staff have the professional knowledge they need to identify pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately. Parents and carers are fully involved in an embedded approach that prioritises establishing

a happy, settled child who is ready to learn. Staff implement well-planned and effective strategies to improve the opportunities and experiences of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely, addressing emerging barriers swiftly. They adapt provision to secure sustained improvement. Leaders use detailed and robust analysis to inform their decisions, ensuring that pupils' support is targeted precisely. The pupil premium strategy is implemented effectively, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive high-quality, tailored interventions that enhance both their academic outcomes and wider development.

Leaders consistently maintain high expectations in the classroom for pupils who face barriers to their learning, ensuring that learning is matched to pupils' needs with precision and that pupils are successful in managing routines alongside their peers. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, ensuring that pupils and families receive timely and appropriate support, affording pupils every opportunity to realise their aspirations. This work includes collaborating successfully with the virtual school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Gawsworth Primary is firmly rooted in its community, with leaders, parents and carers, staff and pupils fully invested in its success. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and performance. They identify clear priorities for improvement and monitor the impact of their actions with rigour. Subject leaders carry out their responsibilities successfully in developing, implementing, monitoring and refining the curriculum.

Through regular, purposeful visits and meetings, governors and trustees maintain firm oversight of the school's context and provide a clear, strategic vision. They work closely with leaders to ensure that resources are deployed effectively to meet pupils' needs and continuously improve outcomes for them. This includes those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and those who face other barriers to learning. They balance support for leaders and staff with appropriate challenge to hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Leaders at all levels are proud that, despite financial challenges and being a rural school, they have remained steadfast in providing a rich personal development offer alongside their academic curriculum. This reflects their commitment to ensuring that the whole child is consistently nurtured and considered.

The trust offers a comprehensive programme of professional learning and career progression, consistently considering staff's wellbeing and workload in decision-making. Staff value the networking and training pathways available to them and the opportunities to share good practice. Staff appreciate the regard shown to them in having a manageable workload. They say that they feel valued and well supported.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well across all subjects of the curriculum. From the Reception Year onwards, they make steady progress through to the end of Year 6. Those pupils with additional needs or other barriers to their learning make appropriate progress from their individual starting points. Typically, pupils produce high-quality work in their books. They can talk confidently about their knowledge, using subject-specific vocabulary, and make links to other aspects of their learning. Nevertheless, some skills that pupils need, such as handwriting and setting out mathematics and science tasks independently, are not supported effectively enough. This compromises the quality of some pupils' work, especially in key stage 2.

In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' outcomes in national curriculum tests taken at the end of key stage 2 are in line with the national average. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Overall attendance is in line with, or above, national figures. However, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils remains above the national average. Leaders monitor attendance closely and have a thorough and accurate understanding of attendance patterns across the school. Leaders have forged positive relationships with the families in their school community. They implement appropriate strategies, such as soft-start routines, 'toast and chat' club in the mornings and supervising the walk to school to support pupils and improve attendance. Due to their actions, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils is showing an improving trend this term.

Leaders' monitoring and analysis of behaviour are thorough. They use this information to put effective strategies in place. Relationships across the school are warm and respectful. Staff act as positive role models, reinforcing the school's expectations effectively. Any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Pupils follow the school rules and behave well. They understand the expectations of 'The Gawsorth way', and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils say they feel safe and well supported. Older pupils display maturity and kindness when engaging with younger pupils during breaktimes. However, a small minority of pupils do not demonstrate the self-discipline or commitment to learning that leaders expect.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

This school offers a wealth of wider opportunities to enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their regular theme days, the most recent being for their Second World War history topic. These involve dressing in costume, participating in expert-led workshops, meeting visitors and sampling themed food. Pupils are encouraged to aspire highly for their futures and their careers. They explore the journeys of inspirational figures, both local and national, learning how these individuals achieved their success. From early years to Year 6, pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

They learn how to stay safe in the community and online. Pupils understand the concept of consent and the characteristics of a healthy versus an unhealthy relationship.

Pupils benefit from an array of trips, including residential stays from Year 2 onwards. Pupils speak excitedly about visits to a local observatory, museum and aquarium. They learn to play musical instruments and take pride in showcasing their talents in performances, both at school and in a concert hall. There is a wide variety of clubs on offer for pupils to attend, such as lacrosse, choir and netball. These opportunities help pupils to develop their abilities, while strengthening their communication and social skills. Leaders track participation closely to ensure that all pupils, including those who may face additional barriers, access and benefit from the school's offer.

The wellbeing of pupils is prioritised by leaders and staff. Leaders have ensured that professional learning for pastoral staff equips them specifically to support pupils' emotional wellbeing. Staff know pupils well and respond sensitively to their needs. As a result of their trusting relationships with staff, pupils, parents and carers are confident in seeking support when they need it.

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

Pupils start each day at Gawsorth Primary with eagerness and enthusiasm. They speak positively about their firm friendships with each other and about having adults in school who are always kind and supportive. This helps pupils feel safe and settled. The school sits at the heart of the village community, with pupils actively contributing to preserving its traditional character. For example, they take part in the local rose queen, scarecrow and Christmas tree festivals. These experiences help pupils feel connected to their community and proud of their school.

Pupils, including those who face barriers to their learning, clearly enjoy school. They consistently live up to, or exceed, the high expectations that leaders set for what they should achieve. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum and are prepared fully for the next stage of their education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other disadvantages are supported expertly by skilled staff who are committed to help them break down barriers to learning. This ensures that they make progress from their starting points.

In lessons, pupils engage well with their learning. There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils conduct themselves well. They are friendly, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils rightly trust adults to support them and to resolve any behaviour or bullying issues that should arise.

Pupils benefit from an extensive personal development and wellbeing offer. They take on leadership roles with maturity, such as being school councillors and health and safety and kindness ambassadors. Many pupils can define key aspects of fundamental British values. They understand the importance of valuing differences and cultural diversity. Pupils glimpse insights into workplaces through the school's partnerships with local farming and catering

businesses. These experiences contribute positively to their sense of responsibility and their aspirations and help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the essential knowledge in writing is taught with greater consistency, enabling pupils to develop the underlying foundational skills needed to produce and present independent work across all subjects, so they are better prepared for the next stage of their education.
 - Leaders should continue to implement the effective strategies in place to reduce persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that rates align with the national average.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Halliard Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jeremy Spencer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Gorton.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff, members of the governing body and members of the trust during the inspection.

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

Headteacher: Lisa Wainwright

Lead inspector:

Ruth Moran, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Angela Sweeting, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Lawson, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

194

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

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)

5.15%

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

4.64%

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

14.43%

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 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	64%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	66%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	79%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

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	67%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	83%	62%	Above

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

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	67%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	83%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	67%	68%	-1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	83%	80%	4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	67%	78%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	83%	80%	4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	3.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	5.9%	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 (2 term)	4.7%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.6%	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.

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