

Holden Clough Primary School

Address: St. Albans Avenue, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, OL6 8XN

Unique reference number (URN): 149664

Inspection report: 24 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Different groups of pupils progress well through the curriculum. They build a deep body of knowledge across the subjects that they study. This is reflected in the end of key stage 2 published data. Year 6 pupils consistently attain above other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils become fluent in reading, writing and number. Their secure grasp of these basic skills enables them to successfully access more complex learning across the curriculum. Pupils produce high-quality work. They are proud of their achievements. Pupils speak with confidence and enthusiasm about topics that they have covered. For instance, older pupils can use sophisticated subject-specific vocabulary when discussing learning in science and history. They demonstrate how their art skills have developed through practising a range of techniques and reflecting on famous works of art. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well prepared for their next stage in education.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Pupils' attendance rates continue to improve. Absence rates for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, remain below the national average. Leaders have well-established procedures and a relentless approach to make sure that pupils come to school regularly. Leaders have made careful changes to the timetable based on feedback from pupils and their families. This has ensured that pupils want to attend and are motivated to be in school, on time, each day. Where pupils' absence causes concern, leaders work successfully with families to make improvements.

During lessons, pupils demonstrate high levels of dedication to their learning. They are polite, curious and courteous. Pupils enjoy their playtimes and interact well with each other. Leaders have made recent changes that promote self-discipline. Staff teach pupils to talk about their feelings. They have developed a consistent approach to teach pupils the language they need to resolve friendship difficulties and manage their own emotions. This is beginning to develop pupils' resilience and independence to manage difficult situations. They know that bullying and unkind words are not accepted. If such incidents should occur, they are dealt with effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

Leaders have designed an ambitious and rich curriculum. They know what works well and continue to make improvements when they spot areas that are not as successful. Teachers

are clear what should be taught and when this should happen. This helps pupils to build the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve well.

Leaders' recent work to further develop purposeful writing opportunities has been considered carefully. This helps pupils to build the knowledge and skills that they need to become fluent oral and written communicators.

Leaders ensure that staff continue to develop their expertise. As a result, teachers deliver lessons clearly and with appropriate subject knowledge. They adapt learning skilfully to ensure that all pupils access the curriculum. For example, they use a range of suitable resources to reduce barriers to learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn successfully due to these well-considered approaches.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' development of basic skills for reading, writing and number. They have a clear programme for securing English and mathematics knowledge. Teachers regularly check pupils' recall of this learning. They put extra support in place when pupils may need to catch up. This allows pupils to read and use number patterns confidently and accurately, which supports future learning. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at greater depth.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders work well with families to ensure that children have a successful start to their education. Leaders have designed a suitable and ambitious early years curriculum that prepares children for future academic success. Staff know the children well and develop their language through the ways they talk with them. They model new vocabulary and encourage two-way conversations. Children develop their communication skills well through these interactions.

The learning environment is engaging. Teachers design activities that enable children to learn all that they should. For example, children in the Nursery class practise their number skills through counting the chicks and eggs that they found on their Easter hunt around the classroom. Children in the Reception class learn to read quickly through the well-delivered phonics programme. Staff model letter formation and teach spelling well. However, there are limited opportunities for children to practice the skills that they need to be successful writers. This is a hindrance for some children when they enter Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing experience success at Holden Clough. They work closely with parents, carers and a range of professionals to identify pupils' needs quickly and review any support offered regularly. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who speak English as an additional language and those facing other challenges get the help they need, when they need it.

Leaders provide a safe environment and a range of adaptations to help pupils flourish. Pupils benefit from additional resources, such as rising desks, visual prompts and adult support in class. They can access the nurture room with their school tortoise during the start

of day and lunchtime. This helps pupils who may experience challenges to feel fully supported in their learning and at busy times of the day.

Staff are trained appropriately to use suitable strategies to ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum fully. Leaders check pupils' progress regularly. They implement any further adjustments for pupils when these are needed. Leaders use additional funding from the school's pupil premium strategy so that it has a positive impact, particularly on the wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils. Generally, this work enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as their disadvantaged peers nationally.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are fully committed to pupils' social, emotional and academic success. They have placed great emphasis on developing the curriculum and supporting pupils to be ready to learn. Leaders know the school well. They are proud of their successes, but equally determined to take further action, which is always in the best interests of pupils, to improve the school further.

Those responsible for governance have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles. Trustees and members of the local governing body hold leaders to account and make regular checks on the school's work to make sure that leaders' actions have the intended impact. For example, they review the pupil premium strategy to ensure that the allocated funding continues to improve the academic success of disadvantaged pupils. Those responsible for governance understand their legal duties and carry them out diligently.

Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to do their job well. Experienced teachers benefit from a culture that develops them as future leaders. They continually learn through research-led professional development and working with others beyond their school. Staff value these opportunities and appreciate how their wellbeing and workload are taken into consideration.

Parents and carers praise the work that leaders do to ensure that their children achieve well and receive high-quality education and care.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a well-thought-out personal development and wellbeing offer. They ensure that staff have the knowledge to deliver the programme effectively. Pupils value their multi-faith school and the opportunities that they have to learn from each other. They relish the chance to reflect on their own beliefs and learn about other religions and traditions. Leaders involve parents, carers and the local community to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. Pupils show an understanding of equality and fairness. They relate this to the fundamental British values of tolerance and mutual respect. In support of this, staff expose pupils to an extensive range of diverse books in the well-structured curriculum.

Pupils gain social skills beyond the classroom. They cooperate well in their outdoor learning sessions and speak positively about the residential visits that develop their ability to work as a team. Through relationship and sex education and health education, pupils learn protective behaviours, such as avoiding peer pressure and not sharing personal details

online. They speak with maturity about the importance of keeping mentally healthy. For example, they recognise stress in their bodies and use ways to stay calm, such as slowing their breathing and talking to others. Pupils have age-appropriate understanding of unhealthy relationships. They know it is important to raise concerns with adults who can help them. Through musical and sporting events, pupils get to showcase their talents. They benefit from well-planned activities to develop their interests in after-school clubs. Trips, such as attending a mock trial to hone their debating skills or visits to local museums, bring their learning in lessons to life.

Leaders are fully committed to supporting pupils' emotional welfare. They provide well-coordinated pastoral care through highly skilled staff. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, benefit from carefully tailored guidance that builds their self-esteem and allows them to fully participate in all aspects of school life. Pupils at Holden Clough are well set up for life beyond their school community.

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

Pupils are greeted each morning by staff who know them well. They enter school happily and are eager to learn. Pupils who may face difficulties, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are identified early. They flourish due to the additional support that they receive from well-trained adults. This allows pupils to settle into the daily routines quickly. Through the warm and trusting relationships with staff, pupils develop a sense of belonging and security. They are safe and understand how to manage age-appropriate risk, such as working and playing online. Pupils are confident that their trusted adults are on hand to support with any worries they may have, including any rare concerns about bullying. Pupils know how to seek support if needed.

A love of learning permeates this school. Pupils enjoy reading and know how this helps them to build their knowledge across subjects. Pupils behave well in class and around school. They are proud of their school and their rates of attendance are high. In lessons, pupils show dedication to their learning and an eagerness to do their best. They speak with enthusiasm about what they have learned. Pupils achieve very well. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are ready for the move into secondary education.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They benefit from a range of opportunities in their school and community to become responsible citizens. Many take on leadership roles, such as sports leaders and mental health ambassadors. They speak with excitement about changes that they have influenced, such as the 'Funday Monday' to promote attendance. They value the opportunity to have their voices heard and make a positive contribution to their school and their wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages, including children in the early years, with more opportunities to write at greater depth.
 - Leaders should continue their work to build pupils' resilience so that they are better equipped to resolve conflict and disagreements without over-reliance on adults.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Victorious 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 (CEO), Karen Burns and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Hodgkinson.

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 met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. The lead inspector also met with the trust CEO, a member of the trust board and members of the local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school joined the trust in 2023. The headteacher and the chair of the local governing body took up post following the previous inspection of the predecessor school.

Leaders do not use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Adam Porter

Lead inspector:

Emily Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz Davidson, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Whittaker, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

320

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

414

Above 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)

26.56%

Close to 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

2.19%

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

11.88%

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

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).

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)	74%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	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)	91%	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)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	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)	92%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	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)	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	46%	Above
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)	83%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	62%	Above
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)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	58%	Above
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)	89%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	59%	Above
2022/23		59%	

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)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	67%	4 pp
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)	83%	81%	3 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	80%	6 pp
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)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	78%	-6 pp
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)	89%	81%	8 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	79%	-1 pp
2022/23		79%	

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)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.9%	5.5%	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)	7.2%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	14.6%	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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