

Halewood Academy

Address: The Avenue, Wood Road, Halewood, Knowsley , Merseyside, L26 1UU

Unique reference number (URN): 139614

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders have secured improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning across the school. There are clear systems in place to track pupils' progress through the curriculum. If pupils develop gaps in their learning, leaders put appropriate support in place to address these. At the same time, leaders have improved pupils' behaviour. This means that, typically, pupils now learn the ambitious curriculum well. On the whole, pupils now produce work that is of a secure standard. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Published results at the end of key stage 4 show an improving trend, particularly for the large number of disadvantaged pupils. Their achievement is in line with national averages across most performance measures.

Typically, pupils develop appropriate knowledge of English and mathematics, which means they are ready for the next stage of their learning. The most recent information shows that most pupils progress to appropriate education, employment or training when they leave Halewood Academy.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders use information about attendance in a strategic and systematic way. They look closely at groups of pupils who may face barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders support pupils who struggle to attend school regularly. They use the 'Re-engage Room' and 'Achievement Centre' in school to help pupils to improve their attendance. As a result of this tracking and support, pupils' attendance rates are in line with national averages. Leaders have reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. However, leaders know that there is more work to be done so that these pupils can benefit from what the school has to offer.

More rigorous routines and high expectations have improved behaviour across the school, including during social time. Leaders ensure that staff and pupils know what is expected of them through clear communication. Consequently, throughout the school day, pupils, for the most part, behave very well. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. They appreciate the improvements made to behaviour. As a result, typically, school is calm and purposeful. Bullying, including online, is rare. Leaders closely track incidents of bullying and respond effectively and promptly. When pupils need additional support to manage their conduct, leaders use the 'Reset' room effectively in order to improve focus on learning. Discrimination, harassment, abuse or violence are not tolerated.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of where strengths lie in the curriculum and where areas need further development. Leaders work effectively to reduce these inconsistencies. They have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and logically ordered. Teachers use their effective subject knowledge to present new ideas clearly. Furthermore, to support pupils who

may find learning challenging, teachers break down new ideas into bite-sized chunks. This means that, on the whole, pupils successfully access new concepts one step at a time.

Leaders have introduced a clear lesson structure. This is typically delivered effectively. For example, in the first part of the lesson, the teacher checks what pupils have remembered about previous topics. As a result, teachers can address any gaps in learning. However, sometimes, staff do not take sufficient account of pupils' starting points. This hinders how effectively some pupils can apply their learning independently.

Leaders know where pupils have gaps in reading, writing and the use of number. Where there are gaps in knowledge, leaders typically make effective use of additional lessons to help pupils to catch up. Staff help pupils in the earliest stages of learning to read catch up quickly.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders know that many pupils face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. They use effective systems, such as the weekly 'Risk Factor Meetings' to identify barriers and put plans in place to reduce them. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged attend school regularly.

Leaders use additional funds appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use approaches that are based on research, including targeted one-to-one and small-group teaching. As a result, attendance rates and published results at the end of key stage 4 are close to the national averages for this cohort of pupils.

In lessons, leaders have ensured that staff know how to support pupils facing barriers to learning. Support strategies include the use of other adults, technology and additional learning opportunities. As a result, pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates.

Leaders make effective use of partnerships with additional services, such as an educational psychologist, alternative provision placements and therapists. They ensure that pupils receive the support that they need to meet their needs. This includes pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care. If leaders find that a support strategy is not working, they will change it so that pupils get the help that they need.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have strengthened many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. They know what is working well and where there are areas for further development. Leaders use clear checking systems, supported by the trust, to make timely improvements to school life. For example, leaders' actions have improved behaviour in school. These positive changes are appreciated by staff and pupils alike.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties. They share the same high ambitions as the school's leaders. They ensure that additional funding is spent wisely and prioritised for those with the greatest barriers to learning and/or wellbeing.

Leaders have carefully considered the professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, leaders have delivered training on strategies to support those pupils who may face barriers to their learning. Consequently, these pupils are now effectively supported in learning the ambitious curriculum. Staff know that leaders are considerate of their workload and wellbeing. For example, the reduction in the number of data collection points throughout the school year has helped staff with their workload. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Leaders work effectively with a range of external partners, such as mental health specialists and local authority committees. These partnerships ensure that pupils get the support they need in a timely way. Leaders have, in the main, forged positive relationships with parents and carers. They use coffee mornings and the annual Christmas community party to effectively break down barriers between home and school. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are committed to securing the best possible outcomes for pupils and the wider community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that meets the requirements of the national curriculum and statutory guidelines. Furthermore, leaders take into account the local context and pupils' views in the design of the personal development curriculum. For example, each academic year begins with a focus on relationships. As a result, pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship.

Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, they teach pupils about the risks associated with artificial intelligence and the dangers of gangs. As a result, pupils know how to keep themselves safe both online and offline.

Through trips abroad and an annual visit from a partner school in Spain, pupils develop a genuine appreciation of difference. Leaders have ensured that pupils know the importance of treating people fairly. Pupils know that discrimination is wrong. They know the importance of tolerance and democracy. As a result of this learning, pupils comment that everyone is welcome at Halewood Academy.

Leaders have enhanced the pastoral support available to pupils in school. For each year group, there is a dedicated team of staff. This means there is always someone on hand to help pupils with anything on their minds. Consequently, pupils feel supported well. For pupils who need more specialist support, leaders provide access to a counsellor and/or an art therapist.

Leaders have planned a comprehensive series of activities for pupils to learn about careers and the next steps of education, employment or training. For example, pupils access independent careers advice. They also complete a week of work experience. Leaders help those pupils who may face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing find a suitable work experience placement. This ensures that everyone can take part. As a result, for the most part, pupils are clear about their choices for life after Halewood.

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

Pupils benefit from clear routines at the start of the school day. They are greeted by staff, who know them well and who address any concerns that they have. This helps pupils to feel valued by the school. As a result, each day starts positively. Pupils feel safe. This is because there are school staff members they can turn to if they are worried about anything. Pupils say that bullying happens rarely at Halewood Academy. If it does occur, pupils know that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Generally, pupils attend school regularly. While leaders have reduced the number of pupils with very low attendance rates, there are still too many pupils who do not attend school as often as they should.

Pupils are proud of the school's increasingly positive reputation in the community. They are pleased that leaders have made the school a calm and orderly place to learn. Typically, pupils behave appropriately throughout the school day. This is because they know what is expected of them. This enables pupils to enjoy their learning and the time they spend with friends at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

The consistent format of lessons means that pupils generally enjoy learning. Pupils in school are now learning the ambitious curriculum well. This prepares them effectively for their next steps in learning. Staff typically remove barriers to learning effectively. For example, they break new ideas down into manageable steps. However, some pupils do not move on to independent learning activities as smoothly as they should.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional opportunities in school. There is something for everyone. For example, pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, the debate club and darts. Pupils know that they can be themselves at school. This means pupils feel that they belong.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently take account of pupils' starting points so that pupils can work independently and achieve well, including in national examinations.
- Leaders should continue to refine their strategies to support pupils who are persistently absent from school so that they attend regularly and benefit from all that school has to offer.

About this inspection

The school is part of the Wade Deacon Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gary Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Fowler.

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.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the executive principal, other school and trust leaders, the CEO and the director of education for the trust, representatives of the trust, representatives of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school makes use of 4 alternative provisions.

Since the previous inspection, a new executive principal has been appointed.

Executive principal: Ian Critchley

Lead inspector:

Neil Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stephen Ruddy, Ofsted Inspector

Alan Hammersley, Ofsted Inspector

Scott Maclean, Ofsted Inspector

David Wadsworth, Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Sexton, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,140

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,200

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.98%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

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

4.56%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.89%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.7%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	24.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.7%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	41.6	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.9	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.5	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.47	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	-0.03	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	9.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	11.8%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.14	-0.57	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	9.3%	53.1%	-43.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	11.8%	52.4%	-40.7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	34.0	50.4	-16.4
2023/24 (final)	32.0	50.0	-18.1
2022/23 (final)	32.4	50.3	-17.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.75	0.16	-0.92
2022/23 (final)	-1.14	0.17	-1.30

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	86%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	85%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.2%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.5%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	29.2%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	33.6%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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