

Leverhulme Community Primary School

Address: Brightmet Drive, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 6EE

Unique reference number (URN): 131271

Inspection report: 17 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Children progress well through the curriculum. Staff interact well with them to skilfully prompt and promote their learning. Staff are aware of the purpose of each activity in the provision so that they can use their conversations with children to reinforce key learning. There has been a sharp focus on developing children's vocabulary and language. Children feel confident to use this new knowledge in different contexts.

The phonics curriculum has been prioritised and it clearly sets out the expectations for children's learning. All staff receive appropriate development to teach phonics consistently well. As a result, the emphasis on children's reading knowledge and skills is ensuring that they are ready for their next steps in their learning.

Children in the two-year-old provision settle quickly and cooperate with others well. They understand routines. Staff build warm, trusting relationships and use simple language to develop children's early communication skills. Children explore a well-organised environment that encourages their curiosity and independence.

Across the early years, staff continually check on children's learning and act quickly to help children overcome gaps so that they can achieve well.

Leaders and staff work well with parents and carers. For example, parents are offered stay and play sessions every half term that focus on the key principles of early years education as well as aspects such as oral health and tooth brushing.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils are included in school life. Leaders take great care to identify pupils' needs and barriers to success. Leaders engage well with parents and carers, and other agencies, to fully understand pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils receive the support that they need.

Staff mostly receive the training they need. This means that teachers typically adapt learning well so that pupils can learn the curriculum. However, on occasion, tasks do not match pupils' next steps in learning as well as they could. This is, at times, the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school's use of the pupil premium funding has been successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils generally achieve well. For example, they attain as well as other disadvantaged pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2. Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning demonstrates a clear understanding of the impact of additional support for vulnerable pupils. This includes for those pupils who have had social care involvement.

Leaders offer a well-rounded personal development programme. This broadens pupils' understanding of the wider world through a range of experiences. Staff make sure pupils can take part fully in these opportunities. This includes those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Teaching introduces pupils to a range of faiths and cultures. Pupils are proud of their accepting and diverse school community. They value the different cultures, religions and languages that the school community represents. Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law, and they can relate these values to their own lives.

The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils to gain the knowledge they need to be prepared for life in modern Britain. This includes a secure grasp of equal rights. Their growing understanding of differences enables them to appreciate the viewpoints of others. Pupils are also encouraged to think carefully about right and wrong and to reflect on how their choices affect those around them. They study different scenarios and have visitors that come into school to reinforce key messages about personal safety. Pupils learn how to stay safe both online and offline. They are taught constructive ways to resolve disagreements. Pupils trust staff to help them if problems arise and know exactly who to approach if they are worried about their wellbeing.

The PSHE curriculum is responsive to emerging needs. For example, the local community police visit the school to teach pupils about the dangers of vaping and knife crime. Pupils recall key aspects of the curriculum well because learning is made clear and relevant.

The relationships, sex and health education curriculum helps pupils recognise the features of healthy, positive friendships. They have an age-appropriate understanding of concepts such as consent and they know how to protect themselves from peer pressure. Staff also support pupils to understand how to look after their physical and emotional wellbeing, including the importance of exercise.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Across the curriculum, pupils do not recall the key knowledge they need well enough. In addition, pupils are sometimes not as well prepared as they should be for their next steps in learning, including some of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is reflected in the typically lower-than-average results in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

The extra support for disadvantaged pupils helps to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as similar pupils nationally. The high rates of pupils moving in and out of the school means that some published results do not truly represent pupils' achievement. This is especially the case in the Year 1 phonics check in 2025. Typically, the pupils who started at Leverhulme in the beginning of Reception reached the expected standard in the phonics check.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders are caught in a cycle of needing to continually address pupils' attendance. This is because their actions have not led to sustained improvements over time. Leaders understand pupils' backgrounds well and the barriers that may stand in the way of regular attendance. However, leaders do not engage parents and carers as well as they might. Although there are some improvements for individuals, overall pupils' attendance is low. Many pupils are often absent. For some, high rates of absence means that they miss too much learning. The arrangements to help pupils catch up with missed learning are not as effective as they should be.

Leaders set out a clear policy and expectations for pupils' behaviour. These are known and followed well by staff. Pupils like the consistency with which any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with. Pupils know that certain behaviours such as derogatory language, violence or bullying are not tolerated. Any disruption to learning is handled well and minimised. Leaders have established a positive environment in which pupils can focus on their work.

Pupils behave well and understand both the consequences and rewards for their behaviour. Where needed, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get effective support to manage their own behaviour. Leaders have come up with imaginative solutions to reduce the need for high-level sanctions at the school. These strategies are ensuring that pupils are calm and included in lessons.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The quality of teaching is variable. This is because sometimes teachers do not address basic errors in pupils' written and mathematical work. This makes it difficult for some pupils to progress as well through the curriculum as they otherwise could. Pupils are not provided with effective support with key knowledge such as in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. As such, errors are not consistently addressed well enough.

The curriculum is well set out. Leaders routinely check how well pupils learn it. That said, they are at an early stage of addressing gaps in pupils' key knowledge.

Pupils' needs are identified and known well by leaders. Even so, the strategies that teachers use to adapt their teaching of the curriculum is not as effective as it could be. At times, staff adopt a 'one size fits all approach' to the selection of tasks for pupils. This is not well suited to the needs of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. Leaders have focused on developing pupils' vocabulary in the early years and key stage 1. This is helping pupils to offer higher quality verbal responses and more adventurous word choices when writing. The phonics curriculum is established. This ensures that pupils gain the essential knowledge that they need to read with accuracy and increasing fluency. If needed, there are systems in place to help pupils to catch up quickly.

Recent disruption to senior leadership has affected the rate of school improvement. As such, some weaknesses in curriculum delivery are only just starting to be addressed. There are signs of improvement. For example, some pupils are beginning to make better progress through the curriculum. However, it is too early to see the difference that leaders' actions are making to pupils overall. Despite this, leaders understand the school and its context well. They have prioritised relevant areas to improve, such as the development of children's vocabulary and language in the early years.

Governors support and challenge leaders by asking pertinent questions and by checking on leaders' work. They ensure that their statutory duties are met.

Leaders use an informed approach to make sure that pupils are placed at the heart of their decision making, particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Staff feel well supported by leaders and governors. Staff know that decisions about school improvement are considered well and that leaders take into account their workload and wellbeing. Staff benefit from a range of development opportunities. This is particularly for leadership roles, where they study for recognised professional qualifications.

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

Pupils receive a warm welcome at the start of each day. This is because staff genuinely care about pupils. In response, pupils trust staff and develop positive relationships with their peers. Leaders have created a school where everyone is valued. As a result, pupils are proud to be part of the Leverhulme school community.

Pupils benefit from clear expectations for behaviour. Their barriers to learning are reduced successfully. Staff meet pupils' needs, including those for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps ensure that pupils are calm and respectful. Pupils feel safe from the harmful effects of bullying. They appreciate the way in which staff deal with incidents of misbehaviour. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, some pupils are often absent. This affects their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning about the interesting topics that they study. Leaders have designed the curriculum well to ensure that pupils learn all that they should. However, it is not delivered consistently well across different year groups. This affects some pupils' achievement in national tests at the end of Year 6, which is typically lower than the national average. This is particularly the case for some pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for the next steps in learning as they should be.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They develop their understanding of diversity well. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their talents and interests through a range of clubs such as choir and gymnastics. Older pupils enjoy their leadership responsibilities, such as being librarians, online safety ambassadors and reading buddies.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they engage parents and carers more effectively to improve the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent.
 - Leaders should ensure that the arrangements to help pupils catch up on any missed learning arising out of their absence are effective.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers adapt the curriculum consistently well so that tasks better match pupils' next learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should ensure that there are higher expectations for pupils' written work, especially in key stage 1, so that common errors in pupils' writing are addressed more systematically.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Kath McArthur.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs coordinator, inclusion manager, governors and a range of staff and pupils during the inspection.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the previous inspection. Three of the four senior leaders are new to post. All but one governor is new to role since the last inspection.

Headteacher: Sarah Curley

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian Young, Ofsted Inspector

Trish Merritt, Ofsted Inspector

Alex Reed, 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

451

Well above 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

522

Well 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)

58.81%

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: 26.3%

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

3.10%

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

39.47%

Well above 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	46%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	45%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	60%	Below

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	57%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	55%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

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	61%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	71%	Below

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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	57%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	73%	Below
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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	35%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	44%	Close to average

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	52%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	49%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	61%	60%	Close to average

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	55%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	51%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average

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	57%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	51%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	59%	Close to average

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	39%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	35%	69%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	67%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-22 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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	49%	81%	-32 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	80%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	61%	78%	-18 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	55%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	51%	78%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	77%	-14 pp

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	57%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	51%	81%	-29 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	79%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	66%	79%	-13 pp

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)	6.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.4%	5.9%	Above

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)	18.8%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	28.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	28.9%	16.2%	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.

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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