

Lightcliffe C of E Primary School

Address: Wakefield Road, Lightcliffe, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 8SH

Unique reference number (URN): 144865

Inspection report: 28 April 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 

Pupils typically achieve well. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 show that attainment is broadly close to national averages across most measures over time. In 2025, outcomes in writing at the expected standard improved and are now above the national average. Outcomes in phonics are a strength, significantly above the national average.

Pupils make progress through the curriculum and acquire knowledge across subjects. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and recall key facts. This knowledge is reflected in their work. For example, in mathematics, work on halves and quarters builds to more complex fractions. Children in the Reception Year remember knowledge from their farm topic. For example, they recall the products in the farm shop and animals typically found on farms.

Leaders closely monitor the progress pupils make. Any gaps in knowledge and skills are usually identified and addressed effectively. This helps to ensure that pupils make progress from their starting points. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have made attendance a priority for the school. Leaders have established clear systems for monitoring pupils' attendance. They analyse attendance data closely at whole-school, year group and individual pupil level, with a focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This information enables leaders to identify and investigate any patterns and trends that may indicate barriers to attendance. Leaders and pastoral staff take action swiftly to address these barriers. For example, pupils who find it hard to come to school have a gentle start to the day with support to regulate their behaviour before lessons. This has a positive impact on pupils' readiness to learn. Leaders have made effective use of the pupil premium to support the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. This support has been successful in reducing absence, including persistent absence.

Behaviour is positive. Leaders have established high expectations through a clear behaviour policy. Staff follow this policy and manage pupils' behaviour well. Suspensions are used appropriately and in consultation with appropriate professionals. The school deals with rare instances of bullying and discriminatory behaviour effectively. Pupils conduct themselves well and follow routines effectively. A calm atmosphere exists in school. There is a culture of mutual respect between pupils and adults. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has put in place a carefully-designed curriculum that covers a broad range of subjects. Leaders have ensured that this curriculum identifies the knowledge that pupils will learn in each subject. Staff typically teach this curriculum well.

The school places a high priority on pupils developing the ability to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Pupils demonstrate this in discussion, starting sentences with phrases such as 'To summarise...' and 'Building on...'. Leaders ensure that pupils learn new and ambitious words each week. Teachers provide clear explanations to pupils to explain and reinforce these words. This helps pupils to widen their vocabulary securely over time.

Phonics lessons are taught with focus and precision. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to segment and blend unfamiliar words successfully. Staff ensure that pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. This helps pupils to practise applying their developing phonic knowledge.

Teaching is typically effective in most lessons and subjects, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding, ensuring they have the necessary knowledge for new learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils revisit previous learning to recall key facts. This helps pupils to consolidate their knowledge and to build new learning on what they already know. On a small number of occasions, in some subjects, teaching is less effective. For example, in a few lessons, staff do not ensure that the quality of pupils' handwriting is consistent. In a few lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their writing knowledge in longer pieces of work. Where this happens, it hinders the learning of some pupils.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years share their classroom with pupils from Year 1. However, leaders have ensured that children in the early years receive a carefully designed curriculum that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. This curriculum sets out the key knowledge that children should learn, and the order in which they should learn it. This helps to prepare children for the curriculum in Year 1.

High expectations are evident in the early years. Children typically secure the basic knowledge and skills that they need for future learning. Children are focused and engaged in learning, for example, in mathematics and phonics sessions. The phonics programme is well embedded and children benefit from precise teaching. Teachers explain new learning well, such as when they model new sounds to children. They check children's understanding effectively. Books are celebrated and on display to encourage children to develop a love of reading.

Leaders recognise the important role that language and communication play in supporting children's readiness for learning. They have ensured that the learning environment helps to promote language and vocabulary. For example, staff introduce new vocabulary to children when they read stories and rhymes to them every day. Children in the early years play and learn through high-quality activities that help to develop their independence.

Leaders ensure that staff follow care practices appropriately. For example, staff are trained to administer first aid to young children. Staff build effective relationships with parents and carers. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged children have their needs identified promptly. They receive appropriate

support from staff and, where necessary, other professionals. This helps children with SEND to make progress from their starting points.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders create focused plans and work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND make progress from their starting points. Staff receive training relevant to the needs of pupils. Leaders closely track the progress pupils make. They meet regularly with teachers to monitor the impact of steps taken to remove barriers.

Staff have a secure understanding of pupils' individual needs. This helps them make appropriate adjustments so that all pupils can learn the curriculum. For example, pupils who experience anxiety at the start of the day receive sensitive support to help them to settle in. Space and time is provided for some pupils to have a break from learning if they need it. These adaptations help to reduce emotional barriers. Pupils with SEND typically have their needs met through appropriate adaptations and are making progress.

Leaders make appropriate use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They have identified clear priorities for this funding, based on pupils' needs. Staff receive relevant training to enable them to address these priorities. For example, staff have received training in wellbeing and mental health support. Leaders monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress carefully. This helps leaders to ensure that their use of the pupil premium has a positive impact on pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious in providing a culture where pupils achieve success. They are determined that pupils are well equipped for their next stage. Leaders understand the school context when considering any challenges or barriers that pupils may face.

The trust has clear mechanisms for the strategic oversight of the school. There is a culture of effective support and collaboration. Leaders develop relationships with local organisations to enhance pupils' personal development.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training that is closely aligned with school improvement priorities. Time is set aside for staff's professional learning and development. For instance, early career teachers receive appropriate time to fulfil their development needs. They feel well supported by colleagues and know they can ask for help when needed. While some staff express concerns about their workload, the trust and leaders are taking positive steps to address this.

Governors and trustees understand their statutory duties and carry them out effectively, for instance, in relation to safeguarding. They maintain the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school. Governors and trustees use reliable evidence to support and challenge leaders. Governors hold leaders to account for improvement in teaching, curriculum, inclusion and outcomes. They scrutinise the impact of pupil premium funding and support for

pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Resources are aligned to strategic priorities, ensuring value for money. Governors are frequent attendees at school events.

The majority of parents and carers are positive about the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a programme for personal, social and health education that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff receive training to enable them to teach this programme effectively. External experts deliver some aspects of the curriculum, for example relationships and sex education. Pupils typically remember the knowledge that they learn.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as tolerance and respect, as part of the school's curriculum. They learn about different faiths, beliefs and cultures. For example, pupils visit a mosque and religious leaders from the community visit school. Pupils talk about the variety of religions they have studied including Judaism and Islam. They understand the importance of respecting other people's beliefs.

Pupils have access to clubs and activities to develop their interests and talents. These include sports, music, dance and choir. Pupils enjoy learning their outdoor curriculum in the school's grounds. Pupils represent the school in sports fixtures and art competitions. Residential visits for older pupils include adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so they can experience activities with their peers. Theatre trips are linked to texts that pupils are studying.

The world of work is a focus with careers activities designed to raise pupils' aspirations. Visits from professionals such as police and fire services support this.

Pupils have opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities. For example, the refugee committee has supported refugees by providing backpacks containing essential equipment. Pupils speak highly of the school's 'kindness ambassadors'. Leaders ensure that pupils' wellbeing is a priority, with provision for pupils who need additional support from trained pastoral staff. Leaders gather pupils' views, such as through surveys. This helps leaders to understand and address pupils' emerging needs and interests.

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

Pupils arrive at school to a calm, cheerful and welcoming environment. They settle quickly into learning. Pupils demonstrate self-discipline. They manage their emotions and cooperate responsibly. Pupils learn how to resolve conflicts by themselves and in appropriate ways.

Pupils are courteous, polite, respectful and curious. They describe the school as a place where everyone is treated fairly. Pupils conduct themselves well and follow routines effectively. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy school. They learn how to stay safe online and know what to do if they have an issue. Pupils know staff care for them and feel they can approach any member of staff if they have a worry. Bullying is rare and would be swiftly dealt with if it occurred.

The school's values of 'inspiring and flourishing together' are evident throughout pupils' experiences. School councillors contribute ideas for how the school could be improved. Eco-committee members help with recycling and improving the school environment. Pupils are proud of their work in supporting refugees and their contribution to the school becoming a 'School of Sanctuary'.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities available beyond the academic curriculum. They talk enthusiastically about visitors who deliver workshops. They enjoy memorable experiences such as residential visits and theatre trips. Pupils have worked with external visitors to plan fundraising events for charities. They enjoy the annual Christmas and summer fayres. These experiences contribute to pupils' personal development.

Pupils typically develop broad vocabulary and detailed understanding across subjects. They usually recall key learning with confidence. Pupils can explain how the school supports them to remember important knowledge, such as key facts about the different faiths that they have studied.

Next steps

- Trustees, leaders and governors should continue to embed strategies to support staff workload and wellbeing to ensure that all staff feel appropriately supported and valued.
- Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, including writing, pupils receive teaching that is consistently effective so that they learn intended knowledge well.

About this inspection

This school is part of Abbey Multi 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), Helen Pratten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gefrin Price.

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 co-headteachers and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body and the trust as well as the CEO. Inspectors spoke with several 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.

The school has appointed co-headteachers since the previous inspection.

Co-Headteachers: Adelle Hustler and Kate Dunkley

Lead inspector:

Dughall McCormick, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Louise Greatrex, Ofsted Inspector

Victoria Oddy, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

399

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

420

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)

6.77%

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

3.01%

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

10.78%

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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49%	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	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

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	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	76%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	84%	73%	Above

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	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	59%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	78%	60%	Above

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	47%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	89%	59%	Above

‘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	35%	68%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	66%	-11 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	78%	78%	-1 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	47%	78%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	56%	77%	-22 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	89%	79%	10 pp

‘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 (3 term)	3.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.8%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.6%	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 (3 term)	4.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	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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