

Mesne Lea Primary School

Address: Walkden Road, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester, M28 7FG

Unique reference number (URN): 149387

Inspection report: 21 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have clear strategies in place to ensure pupils attend school regularly. This work has led to a noticeable improvement in attendance. They ensure that patterns of attendance are checked closely, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who face barriers to regular attendance. Leaders balance care and support with clear expectations. They work effectively with families and the local authority to re-engage any pupils whose attendance starts to decline. Persistent absence and lateness have reduced significantly. This is effective in supporting pupils' friendships and relationships in school, which are now less fragmented due to their increased attendance. Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve attendance. However, there is more to do to ensure that a small number of pupils who continue to miss learning, including those who are disadvantaged, attend regularly.

Leaders have embedded a clear and consistent approach to behaviour. This promotes positive relationships, shared language and emotional regulation. Pupils typically behave well and lessons are usually calm and focused. Pupils move sensibly around the school and are respectful to others. Staff address bullying, discrimination and unkind behaviour quickly and consistently. As a result, pupils are assured that staff typically deal with any issues promptly and successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to engage positively in school life through appropriate adaptations. Pupils throughout the school are familiar with clear routines and expectations.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have designed a coherent curriculum with carefully sequenced knowledge and skills. Leaders prioritise securing pupils' important knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are enthusiastic about the curriculum and enjoy learning a varied and interesting range of subject content.

Teaching is mostly consistent across the school. Pupils are taught through well-planned agreed programmes. Staff develop a shared understanding of these through professional development. This is particularly true for phonics, handwriting, vocabulary and mathematics. Leaders have recently refined the content of the curriculum and how it is taught in a small number of subjects. This has helped teachers to deepen pupils' understanding, particularly their subject-specific knowledge and improve the quality of pupils' written work.

Teaching usually enables pupils to learn age-appropriate content in calm classrooms. Pupils who need some adaptations to access the curriculum typically receive support that enables them to learn effectively. Phonics teaching is consistent and effective. However, in some subjects and lessons, misconceptions are not identified or addressed quickly enough. Occasionally, checks on individual pupils' understanding are not precise. This slows progress for some pupils.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children's wellbeing and welfare in the early years are supported through calm routines and caring relationships. This helps children to feel safe and happy. The school's close work with parents and carers supports a shared approach to children's learning from the start.

Leaders provide clear and purposeful direction. They prioritise early reading alongside communication and language. Staff are supported to develop secure subject knowledge, particularly in early reading, through ongoing professional development. Staff check children's learning carefully to identify those in need of further support. Staff provide targeted adaptations for children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged so they take part fully in their learning.

The curriculum is planned thoughtfully and sets out clear progression in learning. Effective teaching builds children's knowledge. Staff correct misconceptions promptly and use high-quality interactions to support and extend children's language and communication development. Children are encouraged to be independent. However, sometimes opportunities to build on children's independent thinking are sometimes limited.

Children usually demonstrate positive learning behaviours, including listening, following instructions and moving calmly between activities. They follow consistent routines across Nursery Year and the Reception Year. Most children secure the key knowledge and skills needed to access learning. Children are well prepared for their next steps.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders place inclusion at the centre of the school's work. Staff identify pupils' needs early and accurately through well-embedded systems. Leaders use pupil information, external advice and professional development to reduce barriers effectively. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to support pupils who are, or have previously been, known to social care. As a result, pupils are typically very well supported.

Daily routines reinforce this inclusive approach. Staff provide a calm, welcoming start that supports pupils who need reassurance. Staff in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) purposefully adapt provision to meet individual pupils' needs. They use consistent routines and targeted support while ensuring pupils remain fully involved in the whole-school community.

Teachers usually ensure that pupils access the same curriculum as their peers, with appropriate adjustments to learning where necessary. Staff use a step-by-step approach along with specialist support to ensure that pupils with SEND make progress from their starting points. For example, pupils who need social and emotional support benefit from carefully designed personal learning bays.

Leaders use evidence well to target funding purposefully for pupils who are disadvantaged. This reduces barriers and supports wellbeing to enable pupils to achieve well. Leaders make appropriate use of alternative provision to strengthen support through local partnerships and external agencies.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are focused on providing a positive and successful educational experience for pupils. They have a clear understanding of school priorities and address them successfully. Leaders ensure that key areas of the school's work are consistent and well organised. They improve and refine these areas so they are effective for families and staff. This is strengthened because staff know pupils and families well. Leaders identify the challenges faced by different groups, including pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known or previously known to social care and those with other barriers.

Members of the local governing body and members of the board of trustees understand their roles clearly. They meet their legal responsibilities, including the oversight of additional funding. They offer appropriate challenge and support. Leaders' monitoring is thorough and increasingly impactful. They evaluate the effectiveness of improvement, with a shared understanding that impact can take time to be fully evident. Nonetheless, leaders ensure that key milestones are met and prioritise actions to shape pupils' learning experiences.

Leaders focus carefully on staff wellbeing and workload. Staff are highly positive about the support and caring, professional relationships that characterise the school. Professional learning is well aligned to school priorities. It builds staff expertise, particularly in early reading, writing and addressing pupils' needs, supported by input from external specialists.

Engagement with parents and carers and the wider community is highly positive. It supports pupils' safety, enjoyment, attendance and readiness to learn.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The personal development and wellbeing programme is clearly woven into everyday school life. Through lessons and wider experiences, pupils build confidence, feel settled and show positive attitudes to learning. They interact politely with adults and peers, communicate appropriately and demonstrate increasing independence and resilience. Pupils learn to understand different viewpoints. They are encouraged to reflect on how different situations affect their own feelings and those of others. These behaviours reflect the school's commitment to supporting pupils' wellbeing and personal growth.

Pupils learn about relationships, health and wellbeing, including how to manage risks online and offline. They typically understand bullying and know how to seek help if they have concerns. Many pupils talk sensibly about values such as fairness, respect and treating others well. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, which broadens their awareness of life in modern Britain. The personal development programme enables pupils to learn about fundamental British values, which many pupils discuss accurately and maturely.

The school takes an inclusive approach to personal development. Leaders ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities take part in clubs, music tuition and wider opportunities. Pupils benefit from accessing careers-related events and meeting visitors who share their expertise. These experiences help pupils to develop aspirations for the future. Many pupils speak positively about their

possible next steps. Pupils are helped to feel safe, cared for and valued. They are willing to ask adults for help should they need it.

Pupils take on responsibilities such as play leaders and school councillors. These roles develop pupils' confidence and a sense of pride in contributing to school life. Pupils recognise the contribution they make as positive citizens as they continue to grow. Whole-school activities and shared experiences support pupils to build positive relationships with others.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Achievement is variable for pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Sometimes, pupils have gaps in their learning and struggle to recall key concepts. This limits some pupils' ability to build on and apply key knowledge in several areas of the curriculum. Outcomes in national tests and variability in the work that pupils produce show that a considerable proportion do not progress as well as they could from their individual starting points. This means that, sometimes, pupils' achievement lacks consistency over time. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps in education as they could be.

Many pupils do secure key knowledge, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They recall number facts accurately, apply taught strategies and produce work of appropriate quality across subjects. Targeted support enables some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other potential barriers to learning, to develop essential knowledge. Pupils often complete curriculum tasks successfully in wider curriculum subjects.

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

Pupils at Mesne Lea are well known and valued as individuals. Their unique characters and successes are recognised and celebrated. This helps pupils to feel safe and included. They are positive about coming to school. Many pupils attend regularly.

From the start of early years, pupils learn about positive relationships. They typically treat others with respect and kindness. Pupils are highly appreciative of the warm relationships that they have with adults and their friends. Pupils are usually focused in lessons. They understand the importance of not distracting others, enabling them to concentrate on learning. At breaktimes, pupils play together joyfully, making up dances in groups, using the equipment sensibly or engaging in quieter drawing activities. Pupils are assured that staff support them if they have any worries, including concerns about bullying, which are very rare.

Pupils generally enjoy learning. They are taught to know and remember important information from the outset. However, although many pupils learn well, some do not achieve as well as they could over time. This limits their readiness for the next stage in some instances. Nonetheless, leaders make sure that pupils learn from a curriculum that is well considered and set out in a logical order. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who have potential barriers to their learning are supported well. Pupils throughout the school are included fully in the educational offer and wider opportunities. This includes pupils accessing the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.

Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or digital leader. They benefit from experiencing a range of opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. This includes extending their knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe in the community and help others. For example, some pupils participate in a project with the local police force to support positive links in their locality.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff check pupils' understanding carefully so that misconceptions are identified and addressed quickly and accurately so that pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve consistently well over time.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, continue to attend school regularly.

About this inspection

This school is part of Prestolee 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), Michael Tonge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Sargeant.

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 headteacher, deputy headteacher and several other leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO and the trust's head of educational standards and improvement. They also spoke with the trust's head of governance and compliance, the chair of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing board.

Information about this school:

The headteacher took up role in 2022.

The school joined Prestolee Multi Academy Trust in February 2023.

The school includes provision for 12 pupils with Autism.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Victoria Unsworth

Lead inspector:

Sheena Clark, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Dawn Davies, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Finnegan, Ofsted Inspector

Phil Dickson, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

427

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

446

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)

27.56%

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

6.79%

Well 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.03%

Above 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)

Resourced provision and SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	61%	Below
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)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
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)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
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)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
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)	25%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	46%	Close to average
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%	
2024/25 (revised)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
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)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average
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)	44%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average
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)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	67%	-19 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)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	80%	-17 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)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	78%	-15 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	44%	81%	-37 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	79%	-16 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)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	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)	18.1%	13.3%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.8%	14.6%	Close to average

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright