

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School

Address: Grammar School Road, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 1JL

Unique reference number (URN): 144799

Inspection report: 3 February 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 

Most pupils make steady progress as they move through the curriculum. Pupils' results in national qualifications reflect this and are in line with national averages. However, these outcomes do not fully capture the positive progress made by pupils who join the school in later years, often with gaps in their learning. While leaders' work to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has not yet been reflected in national examinations, the quality of these pupils' current work shows that improvements in curriculum and teaching are helping pupils to remember their learning more securely than in the past.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make substantial progress and achieve the qualifications they need to go on to ambitious next steps when they leave school. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, receive targeted support so that they are prepared well for their next stage in education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils' attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders prioritise attendance, and they have clear systems to follow up on any concerns. Their actions have secured sustained improvements for many pupils effectively, particularly those who previously refused to attend school or arrived with very low levels of attendance. Improvements to the rate of disadvantaged pupils' attendance have not yet matched leaders' ambitions.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is mostly calm, respectful and positive. Leaders have created a culture of care and support and maintain high expectations of pupils' conduct. Staff understand and instil these expectations by applying behaviour policies with confidence. This is especially the case in lessons and largely true around the school, although occasionally pupils' behaviour is a little less settled outside of the classroom. The school is a safe environment where harmful behaviours, including bullying, are addressed promptly and effectively. Pupils typically show positive attitudes to learning and engage well in lessons. Staff know pupils well and provide appropriate adjustments for those with any additional barriers. For example, in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff draw on specialist techniques to help pupils to recognise and manage their emotions.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They make informed decisions that address any variations across subjects. Leadership of subjects and the curriculum is effective. Furthermore, leaders ensure that the curriculum in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is reviewed and amended so that pupils gain the knowledge that they need for their next steps. The curriculum is well sequenced to ensure that pupils build on their knowledge securely over time. Typically, teachers check and address pupils' misconceptions well.

Occasionally, the learning activities that teachers choose do not deepen pupils' understanding fully.

Most pupils who need to catch up with any gaps in their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics receive timely extra help. Leaders prioritise targeted reading support for those who need it. While staff often use their subject expertise to extend pupils' spoken and written vocabulary, these strategies could be more fully embedded across subjects.

Leaders and staff know pupils' needs well. Teaching is adapted appropriately for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders ensure that there is a carefully tailored curriculum for pupils in the specially resourced provision. This ensures that these pupils are supported appropriately to develop their knowledge and communication.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. They have clear systems in place to assess pupils' starting points and to identify their needs, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's 'Progress Hub' plays a central role in offering targeted support to pupils with additional needs. For example, the school uses expert support to help reduce language barriers for pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND provides targeted assessment and support for pupils with specific learning needs. This helps teachers to understand barriers and plan effective adaptations to help them to succeed.

Leaders work closely with families, external professionals and the virtual school to shape provision and raise pupils' aspirations. Additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils' learning and wider development. For example, the school provides extra help in literacy and numeracy so that disadvantaged pupils learn the curriculum securely.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and evaluate the impact of inclusion strategies so that they can adjust support when needed. As a result, pupils known to children's social care receive well-coordinated support. The use of alternative provision is monitored carefully to ensure that pupils are safe, attend well and make secure progress. Leaders' evaluations of support for disadvantaged pupils could be further honed to ensure a more significant impact.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and identify clear priorities for improvement. Their work to improve attendance and enhance how the curriculum is implemented has, largely, been successful. Leaders have honed their evaluations to focus more on specific groups of pupils. Governors and trustees meet their statutory duties and provide appropriate support and challenge. They scrutinise the school's use of resources and check the impact of leaders' actions, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When leaders identify any issues, such as inconsistencies between subjects, they address them. For some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, leaders could evaluate the impact of their work even more sharply so that subsequent actions are fully effective.

Leaders ensure that staff benefit from a coherent and effective programme of professional learning. Early career teachers and trainees receive appropriate support through coaching and guidance. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing when making decisions. They work with parents and outside agencies effectively to better shape the support that pupils receive.

Leaders address any barriers to pupils' learning with pupils' best interests in mind. The curriculum in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND is tailored carefully. Leaders set clear and ambitious expectations for pupils' learning and daily experiences. They have begun to implement the school's 'Belonging Charter' successfully to further develop this area. As a result, leaders take well-informed action to raise standards across the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The programme to promote pupils' personal development is age-appropriate and generally structured well. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum supports pupils to develop a secure and mature understanding of risks, both online and offline. This equips them with the knowledge that they need to keep themselves safe. The PSHE and citizenship curriculums is typically taught well, and many pupils develop relevant knowledge about a range of important aspects. However, pupils' knowledge in some aspects of the citizenship curriculum, particularly at key stage 4, is not as secure as it could be.

Pupils encounter a variety of cultural experiences and creative opportunities. Much of this takes place through the school's 'Inspire' programme. For instance, pupils develop their debating skills through daily discussions about current affairs. Pupils also value and benefit from a broad range of trips and visits. International trips help pupils to develop their cultural awareness. Leaders ensure that any barriers pupils might have to accessing these wider opportunities are reduced. For instance, they adapt travel plans to ensure pupils with disabilities can be included. Leaders design targeted clubs, such as rock band, boxing and rowing, to engage pupils who may not otherwise take part, including those who are disadvantaged. This helps to broaden pupils' interests and nurture their talents. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and learn to respect the views of others. For example, they enjoy visiting different places of worship and supporting local community events.

Leaders offer an effective careers education programme. This provides pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with personalised guidance about future education, employment and training. Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND receive support to help them to prepare for adulthood. For example, they use the trust's off-site facilities to explore different career avenues. This helps to raise pupils' aspirations.

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

Pupils are proud to be part of the 'Boteler family'. They work well with each other and form positive relationships with staff. They benefit from a broad range of wider opportunities. For

example, they relish taking part in the school's 'Inspire' programme and local charity events. These activities help pupils to build resilience and develop new interests.

Pupils' behaviour is mostly calm and respectful. They know they have trusted adults to turn to for support. This helps pupils to feel safe. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. Most pupils attend school regularly. Staff work closely and effectively with families to ensure that any barriers to attendance are reduced. Pupils understand the importance of being in school every day.

Most pupils achieve well, including disadvantaged pupils currently at the school. Pupils' overall results in examinations show steady improvement over time. Pupils enjoy learning and speak with pride about their work. They engage in lessons and value the embedded routines. Teachers typically build pupils' knowledge effectively. This helps pupils to understand new ideas and remember important subject content. Pupils who face barriers to learning often get the right support, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop a secure understanding of respect, equality and online safety. They enjoy taking part in community projects and understand how their actions affect others. For example, the school's extensive pupil leadership councils relish opportunities to shape and improve pupils' experiences across the school. These roles encourage pupils to lead and to serve their community diligently. Older pupils talk with confidence about their aspirations. They know what qualifications they need for their career choices, and they are well informed about their stages of learning.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching is highly effective across the curriculum, including in citizenship, by supporting teachers to use learning activities that deepen pupils' learning fully and extend pupils' verbal and written vocabulary.
 - Leaders should ensure that they sharpen their evaluations of their improvement work further so that their actions have as much impact as possible, including for disadvantaged pupils' attendance and achievement.
 - Leaders should ensure that behaviour expectations are applied consistently well, particularly at social times, to help pupils to remain settled and to self-regulate.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of the Challenge 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), Andy Moorcroft, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Howard Platt.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, school leaders, representatives of the trustees, the CEO, some members of the local governing challenge board, the head of the virtual school, representatives of the diocese and the local authority during the inspection. The inspection team scrutinised information and documents that the school provided. Inspectors visited a range of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Inspectors also had discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

There is a designated specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities for 24 pupils with cognition and learning difficulties.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans.

The school uses one registered alternative provision and one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

The school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Chester. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in November 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2029.

Headteacher: Beverley Scott-Herron

Lead inspector:

Amina Modan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Chris Glennon, Ofsted Inspector

Scott Maclean, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Fowler, His Majesty's Inspector

Erin Wheeler, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

861

Below 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

825

Below 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.24%

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

7.90%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.42%

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

Above 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

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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 (provisional)	41.3%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.7%	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 (provisional)	45.9	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	39.8	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)	-0.24	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.28	-0.03	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' 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 (provisional)	17.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	19.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	13.3%	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 (provisional)	31.7	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.1	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)	-0.52	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	-0.57	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' 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 (provisional)	17.9%	52.8%	-35.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	19.3%	53.1%	-33.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	13.3%	52.4%	-39.1 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 (provisional)	31.7	50.3	-18.6
2023/24 (final)	34.4	50.0	-15.6
2022/23 (final)	31.1	50.3	-19.2

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)	-0.52	0.16	-0.68
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	0.17	-0.81

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 (provisional)	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	87%	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 (2 term)	8.0%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.4%	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 (2 term)	20.3%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.4%	26.5%	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