

The Roebuck School

Address: Inkerman Street, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2BN

Unique reference number (URN): 119237

Inspection report: 24 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

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made changes to the curriculum and the way it is taught in response to the shifting school population. Although challenges remain in securing the long-term impact of these developments, they are beginning to bear fruit on pupils' knowledge. It is clear that pupils benefit from the refreshed curriculum and teaching where they have had longer to do so.

The curriculum is ambitious and sequenced carefully so pupils build their understanding over time. It prioritises the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders check on the quality of teaching closely and provide staff with the professional development they need. As a result, teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and are increasingly confident in how to teach the curriculum. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' additional needs to ensure effective adaptations are made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders' actions are having a positive impact, although some inconsistencies remain. The school's context adds complexity. Many pupils join at different points throughout the year. Pupils often arrive with limited English or little prior school experience. Teachers typically identify gaps in pupils' knowledge accurately. However, there is some variation in how effectively they address these. Where practice is less secure, pupils' gaps persist longer than they should. This limits how well pupils understand the key knowledge they need for future learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years make a very positive start to their education. In recent years, more children have entered the early years with learning and/or emotional needs. Staff use their expertise to help children settle quickly into school life. They work effectively on children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff implement well-established routines and have clearly planned approaches to support children's personal, social and emotional development.

Leaders have responded to children's increasing needs by designing a curriculum that flows smoothly from Nursery to Reception. They have thought carefully about what children need to learn and when. Early signs show that a focus on communication and language develops children's skills and knowledge successfully. Children use a wide range of vocabulary in their daily conversations. High-quality interactions support this, although staff occasionally do not build on children's responses. Reading is a clear priority. Children begin to learn phonics at the earliest opportunity. In the Nursery class, teachers lay the foundations that children need to be ready for formal phonics teaching later on.

The school's partnership with parents and carers plays a crucial role in children's success. Parents provide valuable background information that the school uses well to support children's needs. This ongoing communication ensures that a strong partnership continues as children progress through the school.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders take a thorough and systematic approach to identifying pupils' additional needs, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When pupils join the school, leaders act quickly to build a detailed understanding of each pupil. Leaders work effectively with parents and carers to gather accurate information. They put well-targeted support in place. For example, the school's internal provision for pupils with SEND, the 'thrive room', has a positive impact on pupils who struggle to regulate their emotions. The support that staff provide helps pupils to improve their readiness to learn.

When pupils arrive with limited or no prior school experience, leaders act promptly. They recognise that meeting such pupils' social and emotional needs is essential before addressing academic gaps. This approach helps pupils to settle quickly and access learning more effectively. Leaders check pupils' progress closely and adjust provision as needed. They ensure that staff receive the training they need to meet pupils' diverse needs with increasing confidence and consistency.

Leaders' use of additional funding to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils is particularly effective in supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Disadvantaged pupils make steady progress and typically achieve in line with national expectations. However, leaders acknowledge this remains a priority area for further improvement.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors make decisions that serve pupils' best interests. For example, they have redesigned the curriculum, created additional spaces in school to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing and increased nurture provision.

Leaders took the time needed to understand the school's changing context before acting. Their aim is for improvements to become embedded rather than superficial. They are beginning to see the impact of this work. Although not reflected in national assessments, pupils' achievement is improving. In other areas, leaders' actions have led to more sustained improvements. For example, the expectation of pupils' behaviour has been raised and the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent from school has reduced. These examples illustrate that leaders are well equipped to bring about necessary further improvements.

Governors provide strong support but, importantly, they challenge leaders when necessary. When performance falls short, governors ensure they understand the reasons for this and expect to see improvement. They fulfil the duties expected of them, for example their oversight of the school's safeguarding systems. Together, leaders and governors are well placed to secure the progress the school needs.

Leaders prioritise staff's professional learning effectively. Staff value the training opportunities they receive to develop their expertise. They appreciate leaders' attention to managing their workload. Leaders have created a supportive culture in which staff feel empowered to share their views, thoughts and ideas.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive personal development programme. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed and carefully sequenced. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. For example, pupils who attend the 'thrive room' speak passionately about how it improves their wellbeing. Pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships. They typically understand what makes a good friend and can confidently explain how to stay safe when online and in the community. Pupils can apply for a variety of leadership roles in school, such as head boy or head girl. These responsibilities help pupils to understand and contribute to their role within the school community.

Leaders plan a wide range of trips that pupils enjoy, many of which link closely to the curriculum. Pupils visit local mills, museums and country parks to deepen their understanding of the topics they study. Leaders provide an increasingly broad range of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils can take part in construction and photography clubs, as well as several sports activities. Leaders oversee the rate of pupils' participation in such activities to ensure all pupils benefit, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils increasingly understand and demonstrate fundamental British values in their daily learning and behaviour. Older pupils, in particular, have a strong grasp of values, such as democracy. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of mutual tolerance and respect. They know how to treat others fairly and celebrate difference.

The school's pastoral work to support pupils' wellbeing is particularly effective. Pupils benefit from the school's focus on resilience and character. Some pupils receive additional support from external agencies. This helps them to regulate their emotions successfully and participate fully in all the school has to offer.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Historically, pupils have not achieved well. In national reading, writing and mathematics tests, results have been well below national expectations. Recently, the school has had more success in areas such as the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check. That said, over time, these outcomes have also been below what is typical nationally.

However, leaders' actions are starting to have a positive impact. Current pupils make more substantial progress from their starting points. For example, in reading, pupils now make progress that is close to national expectations. Disadvantaged pupils consistently make progress at least in line with their national peers.

In the wider curriculum, pupils recall learning well when they have studied topics in sufficient depth. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately to explain their understanding.

Where gaps in pupils' knowledge remain, these are largely due to limited time in school rather than weaknesses in curriculum and teaching.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' attendance has historically been below the national average and remains so. Leaders have faced different challenges to improve attendance because of the school's changing context. They have responded well to these challenges by analysing attendance information carefully and using this to inform their strategies. Leaders are sensitive to pupils' cultural practices and the wider needs of families. This is contributing to improvements in attendance. For example, the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent is reducing from previously high levels. However, overall, improvements in attendance are not yet sustained so the impact of leaders' work is limited.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff model these consistently. As a result, pupils' conduct has improved over time. Pupils understand and typically follow the school's rules and routines. Staff's high and consistent expectations, combined with pupils' positive conduct, create a calm and orderly environment for learning. Mutual respect between pupils and staff is well established. Where some pupils need additional support to help them regulate their emotions, staff provide timely, effective interventions. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders use suspensions appropriately. Leaders and staff do not tolerate bullying. When rare incidents of discriminatory behaviour occur, leaders respond fairly and sensitively.

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

Pupils of all nationalities enjoy attending and learning at this welcoming school. The school buzzes with excitement. Pupils come from a variety of places around the world. They form a close-knit community in which everyone feels welcomed and valued for their contribution. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They develop an understanding of a range of faiths, cultures and different types of families and enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. These include clubs, trips and leadership roles, such as school councillors, librarians and Year 6 buddies.

Many pupils arrive at different points in the year, or stay only for a short time. Staff go the extra mile to support pupils' transition into the school. Consequently, pupils build positive relationships with their peers and with staff. They show mutual respect. Pupils' behaviour overall is positive. They behave well in lessons. Pupils who attend the 'thrive room' receive the well-targeted support they need. Due to staff's effective help and support, pupils feel safe in school. While some bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively.

Some pupils have little prior experience of school when they arrive. Many have gaps in their knowledge. Some of these gaps do not close as quickly as they need to which hinders pupils' readiness for the next steps in their learning. Pupils are starting to gain an understanding of the topics they study and this improves the longer they are at the school. Nonetheless, some of these improvements are still in the early stages. More time is needed to see the necessary impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils' attendance has risen from a low starting point. However, despite many positive strategies, it is not improving quickly enough. Some pupils continue to attend sporadically, which affects their achievement and participation in the wider opportunities available.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff use their ongoing checks of pupils' learning consistently to inform subsequent teaching, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge close more quickly.
 - Leaders should ensure that the systems and strategies in place to secure rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills are embedded in daily practice so that more pupils leave the school ready for key stage 3.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen their oversight and promotion of the importance of attendance so that more pupils attend regularly.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jackie Williams.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make any use of alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs nursery provision. It operates in a separate building located at Parker Street, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2AJ.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. More pupils who attend the school have previously lived outside of the United Kingdom. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than at the standard admission point.

Headteacher: Jill Alexander-Steele

Lead inspector:

Stuart Perkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nicky Corfield, Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Pars, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

338

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

349

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.51%

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

3.25%

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

11.54%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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)

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	40%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	44%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	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	55%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	53%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	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	63%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	61%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	58%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	15%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	32%	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	45%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	38%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	60%	Below

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	54%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	52%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	48%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	52%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	29%	68%	-39 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	69%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	15%	67%	-52 pp
2022/23 (final)	32%	66%	-35 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	45%	80%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	80%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	78%	-33 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	54%	78%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	78%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	78%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 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	48%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	79%	-41 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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)	6.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.8%	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)	21.4%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	28.1%	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.

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