

Bolton-le-Sands Church of England Primary School

Address: Mount Pleasant Lane, Bolton-le-Sands, Bolton-le-Sands School, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 8DT

Unique reference number (URN): 119521

Inspection report: 9 September 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders place high importance on regular attendance. They have strengthened systems to track, analyse and monitor pupils' attendance. As a result, leaders take swift and appropriate action to maintain high attendance rates for all pupils. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance rates are higher than those seen nationally, and persistent absenteeism is low. Consequently, pupils fully benefit from learning the curriculum and the broad extra-curricular offer available to them. Pupils arrive punctually and are greeted warmly by leaders and staff. Breakfast club provides pupils with a positive start to the school day through healthy snacks and opportunities to socialise with friends.

The school environment is calm and orderly. Leaders and staff place a high priority on routines throughout the school day. Consequently, there is a shared understanding that every moment matters. This helps pupils to concentrate fully and maximise learning time. This is especially the case for children in the early years, who respond well to established routines and develop positive attitudes to learning. They benefit from excellent role models, such as the playground leaders in Year 6. Pupils are keen to do well and value the weekly ambassador awards. They are proud of their achievements. The school is a positive and harmonious place in which to learn and play. As a result, bullying is rare. If it does occur, leaders address it effectively.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders are highly knowledgeable about early years education. They continually reflect and evaluate to ensure that children receive the best start to their education.

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum that equips children with the knowledge they need to be successful learners. Reading, including language and vocabulary development, and mathematics are prioritised. Children begin learning sounds straight away, helping them to develop secure foundations for reading. Staff immerse children in carefully chosen stories, rhymes and songs. They are skilled in engaging children in talk. Consequently, children consistently achieve well and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Warm and nurturing relationships help children in the Reception class to settle quickly and feel safe. Children build meaningful relationships with older pupils, for example, Year 6 prefects, who take their buddy roles seriously. Children rapidly become confident in learning and playing inside and outside the classroom. Staff in the early years prioritise independence. Consequently, children hang up their coats and manage their time and learning with confidence.

Leaders prioritise partnerships with parents and carers. They are warmly welcomed into the school family. Staff carefully consider each child's experiences, interests and starting points. This is especially true for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are known individually. Their transition into the early years is carefully mapped out. As a result, they make swift progress from their varied starting points.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Published data shows that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has been in line with or above the national average over the past 3 years. Pupils secure their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics as they progress through the school. Consequently, this prepares them for their next steps in education. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standard in these subjects is more variable. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as highly as they could by the end of key stage 2.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally achieve well from their varied starting points.

Pupils achieve well in reading. They gain secure phonics knowledge in the early years and key stage 1. Consequently, pupils become fluent and confident readers who enjoy engaging in a range of literature.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed the curriculum carefully. It is broad and ambitious. The curriculum is tailored to the school's context within Bolton-le-Sands. As a result, pertinent links are made with the local area across different subjects. Leaders, including subject leaders, have clearly identified what pupils will know and be able to do from the early years to the end of key stage 2. This content is ordered logically to help pupils build their understanding over time. Leaders regularly review how well the curriculum is helping pupils learn, and they refine it where needed. For instance, leaders recently strengthened the focus on the spelling curriculum. As a result, the curriculum continues to evolve in response to pupils' needs.

Leaders place a high importance on providing pupils with secure knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff skilfully identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use a range of suitable strategies to help pupils to overcome these deficits so that they can keep pace with the curriculum. Assessment information is used well to identify pupils who require additional help and to inform teaching.

Well-trained staff ensure that teaching builds on pupils' prior learning. They use questions carefully to check pupils' understanding. On the whole, staff, including teaching assistants, make careful adaptations to lessons. This ensures that pupils with barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can experience success.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, have implemented well-considered systems to identify pupils' barriers to learning, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that pupils' needs are known and understood by all.

Leaders' work to reduce these barriers is often successful. For example, children receive timely support from the outset in the early years. This ensures that emerging needs are identified and addressed promptly. However, while SEND support plans identify pupils' needs appropriately, targets are not consistently precise or measurable enough to identify pupils' small steps in learning. At times, this prevents leaders from evaluating the impact of support effectively.

Staff work proactively with a range of external specialists, including educational psychologists, counsellors and play therapists. They secure appropriate support for pupils and their families. Leaders maintain a clear overview of vulnerable pupils, including previously looked-after children, to make sure they are included fully in school life and have an equal chance to be successful.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding carefully to make sure that barriers to disadvantaged pupils' learning and wellbeing are reduced.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, provide the school with stability and a clear direction for continual improvement. Leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and the areas requiring further development. Leaders and staff are united in their belief that pupils can achieve higher standards. As a result, there is a powerful drive to build on the school's existing strengths. Leaders work in close partnership with families. Parents and carers speak highly of the school's work and value the collegiate relationship they have with leaders and staff.

Leaders use their well-informed knowledge of the community to make considered decisions, for example, extending school provision through wrap-around care. Decisions are also made in the best interests of pupils. This is especially true for those who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. As a result, there is a deep sense of equity across the school community.

Governors are committed to their roles. They have a secure understanding of their responsibilities and carry them out diligently. Governors use their link roles well to gain a first-hand insight into the effectiveness of the school's work. They use their knowledge and skills to support and challenge leaders appropriately, helping the school to improve.

Staff speak overwhelmingly positively about working at this school. They describe it, proudly, as a 'school family'. They feel well supported by leaders, who consider workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Staff engage in high-quality training opportunities. This enables staff at all stages of their careers to grow in confidence and expertise.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. These opportunities equip them with important life skills and prepare them well for future learning and life beyond school. For example, activities such as swimming, canoeing, bushcraft and adventurous activities help pupils to develop confidence, communication, teamwork and resilience.

Pupils have a deep appreciation of the local and outdoor environments. The school's distinctive outdoor environment strengthens this further. For example, older pupils take proud ownership of the orchard and harvest apples. This helps them to develop responsibility and care for their environment.

The personal, social, health and economic education programme develops pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves physically fit and mentally healthy. Pupils develop secure knowledge of online and offline safety, healthy relationships and balanced diets. Leaders identify pupils with barriers to wellbeing and provide targeted support. As a result, pupils feel supported and ready to learn.

Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and communities through the curriculum. They show respect for others. However, pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is variable throughout the school. Similarly, their understanding of diversity and difference is not as secure as it could be. Pupils do not consistently make meaningful links between this learning and life in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities that develop their talents and interests. For example, members of the 'Bee Club' maintain the school's hives and produce honey and wax candles. Leaders monitor participation carefully and work to ensure that different groups of pupils benefit from these opportunities. Pupils relish opportunities to contribute to school and community life. Charity fundraising and leadership roles develop responsibility and citizenship. House captains lead collective worship, and the school council have influenced important decisions, such as the appointment of the new headteacher. Consequently, pupils feel they have a voice and can make a positive contribution to their school.

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

Pupils are proud to attend this welcoming and supportive village school where the relationships between themselves and staff are warm and caring. Leaders' vision is woven through daily life. This helps to create a school where pupils treat one another with kindness, respect and compassion. Pupils embody the school's values of courage, trust, respect and honour. They benefit from a deep sense of belonging, which helps them to feel safe, secure and valued. Their attendance rates are consistently high.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, flourish. In classrooms and around the school, pupils demonstrate high levels of self-control and consistently rise to leaders' high expectations. They behave very well. Rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. If this does occur, pupils receive the support they need. Pupils concentrate well and apply themselves fully to their learning. Older pupils willingly take on positions of responsibility. For example, Year 6 prefects are excellent role models for younger pupils at lunchtimes. This helps children in the Reception Year to settle quickly and feel part of the school community.

Pupils progress well through the carefully designed curriculum. This includes children in the early years, who get off to a flying start. They gain the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed. Pupils who face barriers to learning or their wellbeing receive timely support to

make sure they learn all that they should. As a result, pupils achieve well and are ready for their next steps.

Pupils benefit from meaningful opportunities to contribute to village life, such as supporting the local food bank. Through these experiences, pupils develop a sense of service and citizenship. A wide range of enrichment opportunities, including athletics, crochet, football and choir, broadens pupils' horizons.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils deepen and embed their detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum, so that more pupils attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
 - Leaders should ensure that the targets set for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently set out the precise goals that pupils are expected to achieve.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils have a deeper understanding of fundamental British values and recognise the differences between people in a diverse society to enable them to be even better prepared for life in modern-day Britain.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Bateman.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 9 and 10 September 2026.

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, other school leaders and staff 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 diocese.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant staffing change since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2026.

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Blackburn. Its last section 48 inspection was April 2026.

The school provides breakfast and after-school provision for pupils.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Ian Gittins

Lead inspector:

Elliot Costas-Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Christopher Metcalfe, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Sherwin, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

290

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: 268

School capacity

315

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)

10.00%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

3.45%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

3.45%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

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	84%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

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	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	54%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	77%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	62%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	85%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	54%	68%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	77%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	62%	78%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	85%	80%	5 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.9%	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)	4.2%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



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