

Bollin Primary School

Address: Apsley Grove, Bowdon, Altrincham, WA14 3AH

Unique reference number (URN): 145746

Inspection report: 22 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve highly across all subjects and phases. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment is consistently above national averages.

Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 develop the basic skills that they need to succeed. In key stage 2, pupils build on these secure foundations to tackle more challenging concepts. Pupils' high-quality work reflects the progress that they make through the curriculum. Pupils have secure recall of their learning. For example, they confidently talk through how to solve mathematical challenges using appropriate vocabulary. Pupils describe their learning across the curriculum with enthusiasm.

Pupils are proud of their 'golden books', which show the progress that they make in developing their handwriting. Leaders closely monitor pupils' application of handwriting skills across all subjects to maintain this momentum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress through the curriculum. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend regularly and on time. As a result, attendance is consistently above national averages for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders build effective relationships with families. Together with meticulous analysis of absence patterns, this helps leaders to understand and remove any barriers to attendance. Leaders also communicate well with families and share attendance updates regularly, which encourages regular attendance.

Pupils rise to the high expectations staff have of their behaviour. Pupils are proud to attend this school and demonstrate mature, responsible behaviour both in class and during social times. They understand and value the school's rules and are motivated by the positive reward systems.

Leaders have developed a highly effective approach to behaviour underpinned by positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. When pupils, including those with SEND, require additional support to manage their behaviour, skilled staff provide this sensitively. Bullying is rare at this school, and pupils are rightly confident that trusted staff will deal with any minor issues when they occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a highly-effective curriculum that identifies the important knowledge pupils need to succeed. Leaders have thoughtfully enriched the curriculum with

practical experiences that help pupils deepen their learning. For example, some curriculum learning is enhanced by practical activities outdoors.

Leaders prioritise reading and are committed to instilling a love of reading in pupils. This is successful. Pupils benefit from reading a wide range of quality books in all curriculum areas. Staff teach younger pupils to read quickly, helping them to secure knowledge in early reading. This is developed further in key stage 2, when pupils become avid readers who are passionate about books and stories.

Leaders ensure pupils consistently develop their knowledge in mathematics. Recent refinements to the school's approach to teaching mathematics have helped all pupils secure their understanding of early number foundations. As a result, pupils build on these foundations to deepen their learning in mathematical concepts.

Teaching is consistently effective across the school. Staff regularly check that pupils have understood their learning. If pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have gaps in their knowledge, staff adapt teaching carefully to support them to catch up.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders ensure that children receive a highly effective start to their education. In Nursery, the curriculum is purposefully designed to prioritise communication, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Children's welfare is carefully considered, and staff respond with care to meet their needs. Leaders ensure the environment provides a wealth of opportunities for children to practise and develop the skills they need. For example, the mud kitchen and bike track are enhanced to support physical development skills.

Children benefit from purposeful and rich adult interactions that deepen learning opportunities. For example, staff encourage pupils to add equipment such as ramps to their car play and use story language in role play. As a result, children develop a wide range of vocabulary.

Leaders skilfully extend the curriculum into Reception to build on what children have previously learned. Leaders prioritise early reading and number skills. Children quickly secure phonics knowledge, enabling them to read simple words and sentences and build confidence as readers. They develop a strong understanding of early number concepts, giving them the essential foundations needed for later mathematics.

If children struggle with new learning, additional support is quickly forthcoming. This helps children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, keep up with their learning. By the end of their time in Reception Year, children achieve well and are very well prepared for entry into Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of their decision-making. They have created a culture which prioritises building relationships with pupils and their families. This helps leaders to

identify pupil's needs quickly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are known or previously known to social care. Parents and carers value the care and attention their children receive.

Leaders ensure that staff are expert at meeting a range of needs. As a result, pupils receive personalised, high-quality support that enables them to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Leaders work collaboratively with other schools in the trust to secure high-quality provision, giving staff access to regular training and advice. As a result, staff skilfully adapt their teaching. For example, they use accessible technology to develop pupils' independence and successfully remove barriers to learning. Leaders regularly check the impact of these strategies and act swiftly if changes in provision are needed. As a result, pupils with SEND make accelerated progress through the curriculum.

Leaders are resolute in overcoming any barriers for pupils who face disadvantage. Leaders meet regularly to review the progress these pupils make to ensure that they receive effective pastoral support. Leaders also use additional funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. This has been particularly effective in improving attendance for this group of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders, including trustees and members of the local governing body, are highly knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. They are highly ambitious for pupils and are committed to a cycle of continuous improvement. Leaders work collaboratively with other leaders in the trust to share good practice and reflect on research. This means that strategic decisions result in a consistently high-quality education for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are proactive and take effective action to further refine aspects of the school's provision.

Effective professional development empowers staff to make decisions about curriculum implementation, particularly when adapting lessons for pupils with SEND. This means that pupils are well supported and make effective progress. Leaders have thought carefully about staff workload and wellbeing. Staff are proud to work in the school and speak highly of its leadership.

Parents and carers are recognised by leaders as partners in their children's education. Leaders have created highly effective working relationships with families who appreciate the education and care staff provide.

Those with responsibility for governance know the school and its community well. They promote a collaborative relationship with school leaders that combines support with rigorous challenge. Trustees and members of the local governing body have developed a meticulous understanding of the school, including through visits, discussions with pupils and staff and regular reviews of school information.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. A bespoke programme has been carefully crafted to provide pupils with a wide range of enrichment opportunities alongside a whole-school approach to wellbeing. Pupils develop traits such as responsibility, teamwork and determination through a range of leadership opportunities. For example, the eco-council focuses on reducing waste by making battery boxes to encourage recycling, and librarians relish maintaining the much-loved school library.

Pupils benefit from special events such as an international festival, where families are invited into school to share their cultures and traditions through food, story and rhyme. This helps pupils to celebrate difference within their community.

Leaders provide a vast array of trips and visits. Leaders prioritise local trips that help pupils to understand how their local area and community have changed over time. Pupils are proud of their school and where it sits in their community. They also take pride in the school allotment and work hard to sustain its produce. For example, pupils take responsibility for the 'worm bin' and tend to herbs which they use to make focaccia.

Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as orienteering, cross-country and gardening. These activities encourage pupils to develop their talents and interests. Leaders ensure that all pupils can attend.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, developing a detailed understanding of online safety and healthy eating. They also benefit from enacting democratic processes in school. For instance, pupils vote on which class stories to read and eagerly anticipate applying for roles on the pupil parliament. As a result, pupils develop a thorough understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils learn to understand their own mental health. Leaders have devised a curriculum that helps pupils understand their emotions. This starts in the early years where children take part in a comprehensive social and emotional programme. Older pupils develop a detailed understanding of their emotions. As a result, pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities, receive highly effective support for their wellbeing.

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

Pupils thrive at this school. This is due to committed staff who put them at the centre of their decision-making. Pupils flourish under the school's mission of 'growing hearts and minds'. They benefit from a highly effective personal development programme. This means that pupils learn to embrace responsibility and make meaningful contributions to their school.

Pupils benefit from excellent relationships with staff which make them feel safe and confident. Bullying is uncommon and pupils are confident that it would be dealt with effectively. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand leaders' high expectations and consistently rise to them.

Pupils enjoy their learning. The ambitious curriculum challenges them to make connections, deepen their understanding and develop a positive mindset. This ensures pupils demonstrate a 'can-do' attitude to their learning. Pupils develop resilience and perseverance, which help them to make effective progress through the curriculum.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Starting in the Nursery Year, children develop an increasingly wide vocabulary that prepares them exceedingly well to learn to read in the Reception class. These strong foundations mean pupils start Year 1 with confidence and are ready to deepen their learning further. As pupils move through the school, they develop a genuine love of reading. They make use of immersive reading areas and a well-stocked library.

Pupils experience an enriched curriculum and enjoy learning outdoors. Younger pupils enjoy developing forest skills in the woodland area, and older pupils benefit from the bespoke permaculture curriculum. Pupils value hands-on learning experiences, such as growing and harvesting food, nature investigation and science exploration. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve highly over time across the curriculum. At the end of Year 6, outcomes exceed national averages. Pupils are incredibly well-prepared for secondary school.

Next steps

- Leaders should sustain and build on their existing work to further refine handwriting to ensure that pupils continue to maintain accuracy and letter formation across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Inspiring Learners 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, Kylie Spark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Brindley.

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, senior leaders, the chief education officer, trustees and members of the local governing body during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with staff, pupils, parents and the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Jo Costello, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Neil Le Feuvre, Ofsted Inspector

Louise Finlay, 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

368

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: 268

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

6.02%

Well 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

1.36%

Below 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

6.52%

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	81%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	60%	Above

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	88%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	94%	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	88%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	91%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	71%	Above

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)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	38%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	71%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	88%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	88%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

‘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	48%	68%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	69%	-32 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	71%	80%	-8 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	88%	78%	9 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	71%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	88%	78%	9 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.0%	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)	5.8%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	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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