

Bollington St John's CofE Primary School

Address: Grimshaw Lane, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 5LY

Unique reference number (URN): 111324

Inspection report: 15 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Over time, pupils attain well at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. These outcomes are close to national averages. Leaders' work to strengthen the teaching of phonics and reading fluency contributes to these positive outcomes.

At times, expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are not high enough. Consequently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to deepen their knowledge. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils who attain the higher standard in mathematics at the end of Year 6, which is lower than the national average.

Across the school, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop secure knowledge throughout the curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well from their individual starting points. Alongside their peers, they are well prepared for the next stages in their learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' attendance. They use systems well to monitor attendance closely. Leaders respond swiftly when concerns are raised. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly. When pupils face barriers to school attendance, leaders work closely with parents and carers to provide additional support. For example, the 'meet and greet' morning club provides some pupils with a gentle start to the school day. This helps to make sure that they are in school on time and ready to learn. Leaders' efforts have also led to a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Respectful relationships contribute significantly to the school's positive culture. In lessons, pupils are typically well behaved. They are polite and respectful. Pupils rarely need to be reminded of the school rules. Those who need help to manage their emotions are supported by staff, who make effective use of classroom 'calm corners' and wellbeing spaces around the school. This helps pupils to reflect on their actions before swiftly re-joining their learning. Bullying is rare. Staff and leaders deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed the curriculum carefully to ensure that it is ambitious. It is logically ordered so that pupils' learning builds step by step. The curriculum inspires pupils to learn about the world around them. They are keen to learn about sustainability and climate change.

Leaders have recently strengthened the curriculum to ensure pupils develop suitable foundations in early reading, phonics and number. This is working well and enables pupils to successfully access the curriculum beyond English. However, leaders' work to improve the teaching of spelling and handwriting is at an early stage. Teachers are not consistently addressing these gaps in learning as swiftly as they could. In addition, although learning

activities are generally appropriate, on occasion, in mathematics, they do not support pupils to deepen their learning and achieve as highly as they could.

Generally, staff use assessment information well to check what pupils already know and remember. This helps to ensure that new learning builds securely on what has gone before. Staff routinely adapt lessons carefully to support pupils who require additional support. This helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn alongside their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently extended the early years to include a new nursery provision. They have reviewed the early years curriculum to ensure that it enables children to make progress from the Nursery class and into the Reception Year. As a result, children benefit from an ambitious curriculum that helps them to achieve well.

Leaders use transition arrangements well to develop relationships with children and their families. This helps children settle quickly into school and become familiar with routines.

Communication and language are prioritised when children start school. Staff make checks to find out what children know and can do. This information is used carefully to design activities that build on what children already know. This helps children to develop confidence in speaking and using new words.

Children confidently engage in learning activities and develop independence quickly. Leaders purposefully create opportunities for older pupils to act as role models for children in the early years. For example, older pupils help children pick apples from the school orchard to bake an apple pie. This helps children develop maturity and confidence.

If children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, struggle with new learning, well-trained staff provide additional support to help them keep up with their peers. Children quickly become confident learners and achieve well by the end of Reception. This prepares them well for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a culture that includes all pupils. Leaders take appropriate and swift action to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged are identified and met. Leaders ensure that staff understand the needs of individual pupils. Leaders build relationships with parents and carers quickly. This helps them to understand pupils' barriers and design activities that meet their needs.

Staff are well trained and skilled in adapting teaching and in supporting pupils' social and emotional needs. Staff skilfully weave support into teaching to ensure pupils, including those with SEND, typically make steady progress through the curriculum. Staff help pupils to complete their work successfully alongside their peers. Leaders review the effectiveness of the help staff provide for pupils. This helps them to ensure that support for pupils has the intended impact.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well to broaden the range of opportunities that they have beyond the academic curriculum. These opportunities particularly benefit pupils who are disadvantaged and those known to social care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor most areas of the school's work effectively. As a result, they understand the school's strengths and have an accurate understanding of the areas for improvement. Leaders are proactive and have taken steps to strengthen aspects of the school's curriculum. This has enabled more pupils to attain well over time.

Leaders focus on the most vulnerable pupils at the school. They pay particular attention to pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face barriers to their learning.

Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing. Staff feel well supported and listened to. They are proud to work at the school. Staff benefit from a programme of professional development that develops their skills and knowledge.

Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties. They maintain a clear oversight of how well the school is performing. Governors use their knowledge and expertise to provide leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors recognise the positive impact that leaders' actions are having. Together with leaders, governors act in the best interests of pupils.

Leaders have established effective working relationships with parents and carers, who appreciate the effective support the school provides. Families particularly value the relationships and care provided by staff. Leaders develop productive relationships with external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils and their families.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' well-planned approach to personal development is central to the school's ethos. Leaders prioritise wellbeing and relationships. As such, the pastoral offer is well considered. Staff know pupils well. This helps many pupils to develop socially and emotionally.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to develop pupils as global citizens. Pupils enjoy learning about important global issues such as world hunger, global warming and endangered animals. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their experiences, values and beliefs.

They relish the opportunities they have to take on leadership roles in the school. For example, the eco council leads an initiative to reduce food waste at lunchtimes, and they monitor this carefully. The school parliament collects pupils' views and shares these with school leaders. This has helped pupils take a role in improving facilities at the school. Pupils recognise the positive impact of their work, and they are proud of their achievements. These opportunities teach pupils to become helpful citizens.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including from risks online and offline. They learn about the importance of mutual respect and treating each other with kindness. They have a developing understanding of fundamental British values.

Leaders have devised a wide-ranging set of additional opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences. Special events such as the 'summer academy programme' enable pupils to develop their skills and talents through activities such as working alongside the emergency services and taking part in enterprise activities. These experiences provide pupils with ambition for their future.

Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular opportunities, including gardening, choir and sports. They also enjoy learning outdoors and taking part in woodland activities. These opportunities help pupils to develop new interests, skills and confidence. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils can take part in these activities alongside their peers.

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

Pupils benefit from leaders' work to create an inclusive, nurturing culture. Pupils are proud of the school's values and describe it as a place where everybody can be themselves. They develop warm relationships with staff. This makes pupils feel safe and secure. It creates a sense of belonging in this small school family. As a result, pupils attend school regularly. When they arrive at school, they settle quickly into familiar routines. This helps learning to begin promptly. Pupils benefit from classroom environments that are calm and purposeful. This helps them to focus on their learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and work hard.

Inclusion is a priority in this school. When pupils face barriers in their lives, leaders work closely with families to reduce these so that all pupils can succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate help to progress well from their starting points. They benefit from a wide range of support.

From the early years onwards, pupils benefit from high-quality teaching and a well-structured curriculum. They are typically well prepared for their next stage of education. Pupils develop a mature understanding of the impact they can have on their community. For example, they work closely with the local food bank and take action to reduce litter in the local area. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They enjoy chatting and playing together at social times. Pupils know that staff deal with issues, such as bullying, swiftly and fairly. Many pupils participate in extra-curricular activities such as choir, sports and music. These opportunities help pupils grow in confidence. Leaders make sure that all pupils have the opportunity to join in.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching provides sufficient opportunities to deepen learning for pupils who can attain more highly in mathematics.

- Leaders should ensure that the strategies to improve pupils' handwriting and spelling are taught and modelled consistently well across the school so that all pupils secure the knowledge and skills they need.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Mike Akerman and John Rogers.

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

This inspection took place on 15 and 16 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, senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives from the governing body, the diocese and the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chester. Its last section 48 inspection was April 2018.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher : Melanie Walker

Lead inspector:

Jo Costello, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Peter Berry, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

102

Well 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: 268

School capacity

105

Well 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

6.86%

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

7.84%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.67%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	73%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	S	46%	S
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
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	S	62%	S
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	S	59%	S
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	S	60%	S
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	S	68%	S
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	S	80%	S
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	S	78%	S
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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	5.9%	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 (3 term)	8.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	15.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%	16.2%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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