

North Walkden Primary School

Address: Worsley Road North, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester, M28 3QD

Unique reference number (URN): 105922

Inspection report: 28 April 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 

Over the past few years, leaders have implemented an ambitious new curriculum. They have made sure that it includes the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Each subject is carefully organised so that new learning builds on what has gone before. Staff benefit from the training that they have had. This enables them to teach effectively and use carefully-chosen approaches that help pupils to remember what they learn. This includes the school-wide focus on vocabulary. Staff identify the most important words that pupils need to know and explain what they mean. Leaders have especially focused on the teaching of important basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This has had a positive impact on pupils at the earlier stages of reading and writing, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Skilled staff ensure that pupils learn sounds and letters so that they can learn to read, hold their pencil correctly to write and become confident with number facts. Leaders check to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent.

Leaders' work has improved the quality of the curriculum and teaching. This has not had time to impact on national test results at the end of Year 6.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have made improvements to the early years provision. Close liaison with parents and carers ensures that staff understand children's needs before they start in the Nursery class. Caring staff make sure that children feel secure in the learning environment. Children swiftly get to know routines. For example, when they arrive each morning children learn how to hang up their own coat and join in with the first activity of the day.

The carefully-designed curriculum and effective teaching ensure that children achieve well. Staff prioritise high quality interactions with children. They model key words and support children to develop their spoken language. For instance, in the Reception class, children retell the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' by building a beanstalk and talking about the characters. Effective systems are in place to ensure that children benefit from the range of activities on offer indoors and outside.

Leaders' clear focus on children securing basic skills in phonics, early writing and early mathematics has been successful. Well-trained staff ensure that children develop this key knowledge and understanding as they move through the Reception Year. Pupils leave ready and well-prepared for Year 1.

Children's needs are well met. They are well cared for and learn the importance of self-care and how to manage their feelings.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities on offer to promote their personal development and wellbeing. Leaders encourage pupils to never give up. This shapes pupils' attitudes to learning and future ambition. Through the curriculum for personal social and

health education (PSHE), pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, how to stay healthy and how to manage their emotions. Pastoral support is effective. A wide range of targeted support helps pupils feel safe, valued and supported.

Leaders use the school's values, such as pride, perseverance, independence and respect, to help pupils to develop as young citizens. Pupils develop a secure understanding of these important values. They talk confidently about democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance. Through PSHE and other subjects, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and show respect for difference. They recall learning about important people from the past linked to equality and social justice and apply this knowledge to modern life. Assemblies and curriculum themes reinforce these messages consistently.

Personal development extends beyond lessons. Pupils enjoy a range of trips, for instance to the zoo, fire station and museum. There are opportunities to extend the curriculum. For example, pupils visit a local air raid shelter to bring to life their learning about World War 2. Pupils agree that this makes learning memorable. The 'world of work week' expands pupils' horizons when they meet professionals from the emergency services, energy and aviation industries.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding to make sure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on all the school has to offer. Pupils enjoy attending a range of clubs and leaders encourage uptake, although this is not yet high for disadvantaged pupils or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve well enough in the end of key stage 2 tests. As a result, these pupils are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders' work on the curriculum since the last inspection has not had time to improve pupils' overall achievement by the end of Year 6. This is because older pupils have gaps in their knowledge from previously weaker provision.

Despite this, pupils typically learn well in lessons. This includes in subjects such as science and history. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally make progress from their starting points in these subjects. Leaders' focus on securing important skills in reading, writing and mathematics is having a positive effect for children in the early years and key stage 1, and for older pupils at the earlier stages of learning. This also enables most pupils to access learning successfully in other subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Attendance has declined this year. It is below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders know pupils well and they identify any barriers to pupils attending regularly enough. Leaders personalise the support that they give to pupils. As part of this, leaders liaise with parents

and carers, the local authority and other agencies in an effort to improve attendance. However, leaders' actions have not been swift enough to improve attendance, including for those pupils who are absent the most often.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very positive. Pupils behave extremely well and follow clear routines. This starts as soon as children begin in the Nursery class. Leaders set high expectations and staff apply these consistently. Leaders do not tolerate bullying and deal with incidents quickly. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully and take part in activities with enthusiasm. Caring staff support pupils' behaviour and help pupils to regulate their emotions. As a result, classrooms remain calm. Well-trained staff offer additional support to those pupils who need it and pupils know how to access this extra help.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the additional support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes pupils with an education, health and care plan. This means that leaders do not have the information that they need to determine if this support is effective, or to make any necessary changes quickly enough. At times, leaders do not give sufficient thought to the progress of some pupils with additional needs. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Although alternative provision is appropriately sought, leaders do not maintain effective oversight of it.

That said, leaders do ensure that pupils with SEND are accurately identified and their needs assessed. Staff use the training that they have had to ensure that pupils are typically well supported in class. This is especially the case in English and mathematics. Pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care receive support to access all that the school offers. Leaders prioritise pastoral care. Leaders use additional funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive extra learning support and can take part in sporting and musical activities with their peers.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, they have not acted quickly enough to improve some aspects of the school's work. As a result, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not achieve or thrive as well as they should. Leaders do not have a precise view of how well some actions are implemented or whether they are having the intended impact. This limits the effectiveness of strategic leadership and slows the pace of improvement.

Since the last inspection, leaders have begun to prioritise curriculum development, teaching and the early years provision. These actions have had a positive impact across the school. Leaders provide regular training to support staff in developing their knowledge and skills. This helps staff to feel confident in their roles.

Governors meet their statutory duties. They receive information from leaders about the school's work and provide appropriate support with some challenge. Leaders and governors place an emphasis on staff's wellbeing and workload. They give staff time to complete

additional tasks and reduce any unnecessary demands. Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

Leaders build positive relationships with parents, carers and the wider community. Parents appreciate the care and support staff provide for their children. Leaders work with other professionals to support pupils' needs.

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

North Walkden Primary School is a caring and happy school community. Pupils feel valued and welcome by staff who know each child as an individual. Staff want the best for every pupil and encourage them to live up to the school's motto, 'reach for the stars'.

Pupils behave very well and show care for one another. They are proud of their positive behaviour. Children in the Nursery class settle quickly and follow routines. Older pupils help others. For example, Year 6 monitors encourage sensible walking along the corridors. Pupils are polite to staff and helpful to visitors. Bullying and unkind behaviour are not tolerated. Pupils trust staff to listen and act quickly when incidents arise. This helps pupils to feel safe.

In lessons, pupils are motivated to learn. They appreciate how their teachers help them to remember new ideas. Pupils concentrate well and try their best. Most pupils learn well. However, outcomes at the end of Year 6 show that some pupils are not sufficiently well prepared for secondary school. Attendance is also below the national average. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. While many of these pupils make progress from their starting points, some do not achieve or attend school as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from a range of activities beyond the classroom such as choir, football and knitting clubs. The Year 6 residential visit to Shropshire is a highlight. Pupils take part in activities that push them outside their comfort zones. They learn to work as a team. These experiences build courage, independence and resilience.

The school provides a range of leadership opportunities. Pupils take on roles such as school councillor and junior safety officer. These roles help pupils learn about responsibility and develop their voices. Pupils understand that their views matter.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that it has the intended impact on these pupils' achievement.
- Leaders should swiftly address identified barriers to attendance to ensure that all pupils attend regularly, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Leaders should ensure that gaps in learning caused by previous weak provision are closed so that pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 2 and are fully prepared for the

next stage of their education.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lisa Carter.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. They also spoke to members of the governing body, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 1 alternative provision, which is unregistered.

Headteacher: Helen Warburton

Lead inspector:

Frith Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kelly Eyres, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Gough, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

231

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

236

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)

47.32%

Well 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

1.73%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.48%

Above 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	45%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	34%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41%	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	62%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	52%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	64%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	62%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	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 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52%	73%	Below

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	34%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	20%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	10%	44%	Below

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	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	40%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	77%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	40%	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	55%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	40%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	85%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	40%	58%	Below

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	53%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	20%	59%	Below

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	34%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	20%	69%	-49 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	67%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	10%	66%	-56 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	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	40%	81%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	77%	80%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	78%	-38 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	55%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	40%	78%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	85%	78%	7 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	40%	77%	-37 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	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	77%	79%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	20%	79%	-59 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 (3 term)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	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)	11.3%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.1%	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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