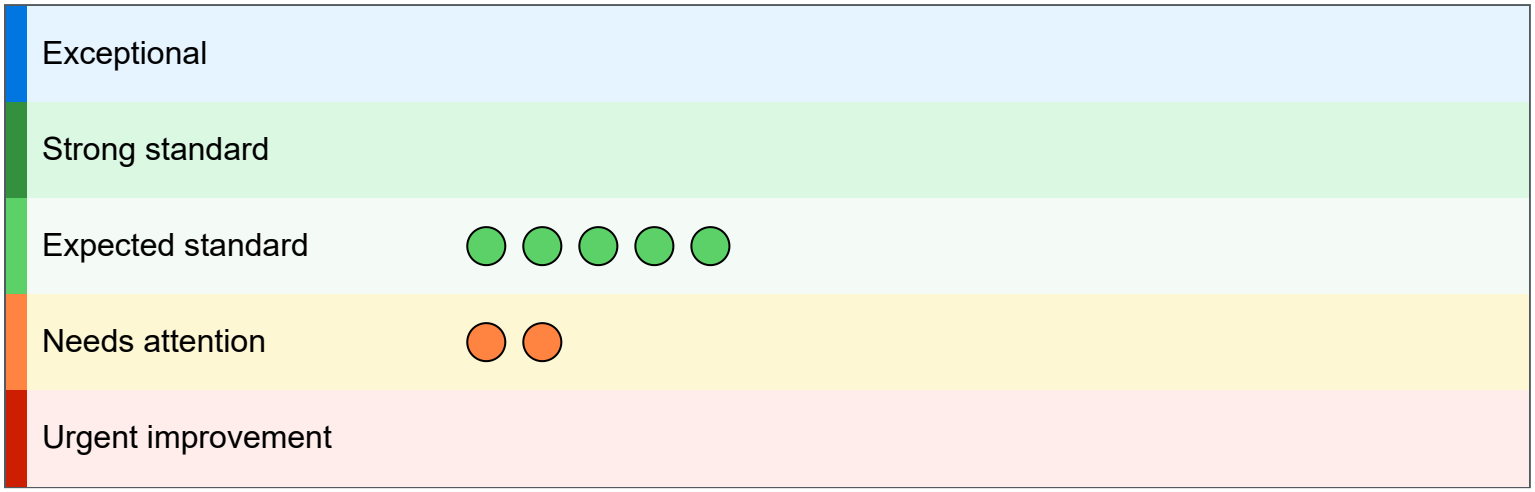
Rivacre Valley Primary School

Address: Rivacre Brow, Overpool, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 1LE

Unique reference number (URN): 130270

Inspection report: 22 September 2026



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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have clear systems in place to monitor pupils' absence from school. They check pupils' attendance closely and contact families quickly when pupils are not in school. Personalised approaches to reduce barriers to attendance are skilfully put in place. This helps more pupils benefit from being in school regularly. Pupils' attendance rates have risen and persistent absence has reduced. Overall absence rates remain below the national average. However, leaders' actions to bring about improvements for individual pupils and groups of pupils have been highly effective. This has led to marked improvements.

Pupils are proud to attend their school. They play and work together harmoniously. Social times in school are a joyful experience. Pupils behave well across the school day. Leaders have created a safe and nurturing environment where pupils can focus on their learning. They typically pay full attention in lessons. From the early years, children are taught to be courteous and considerate of others. They rise to the high expectations set for them and manage their emotions well. Pupils who struggle to manage their feelings receive helpful guidance from vigilant staff. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour are not accepted. Staff and pupils raise concerns confidently and leaders take immediate action to reduce further incidents.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders have implemented well-considered learning experiences across the classes in early years. The structured curriculum is built around high-quality literature to promote language development and an early love of reading. Children in the Nursery class enjoy songs and rhymes that develop their speaking and listening skills and introduce early mathematical language. This prepares them well for learning phonics and mastering counting. Children learn how to read and develop confidence in using number in the Reception Year.

Staff play a key role in developing children's communication skills. They model new vocabulary through play opportunities and encourage talk through effective questioning. Interactions between staff and children are warm and purposeful. This creates a secure environment where children feel safe to try new activities, express themselves clearly and grow in independence.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers to identify children's needs quickly, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents benefit from being involved in their child's learning. They attend workshops to support them with home reading and get to share their 'wow' moments with staff to celebrate achievements outside of school. Children are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They are quick to identify barriers to pupils' wellbeing and learning. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide the right support for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils known to children's social care. In the early years,

assessment information is used well from the time children join the school. Leaders seek specialist advice and information from families to identify children's barriers to language and communication early.

Staff are trained to adapt how they deliver the curriculum to reduce barriers for pupils. Where support is well matched, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to access the curriculum alongside their peers. However, leaders' checks on the impact of support for pupils with SEND lack the necessary rigour. Leaders are not assured that the support that some of these pupils receive is accurately matched to their learning needs to make a sustained difference.

Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and provide focused staff training. This helps staff to support pupils' social and emotional development effectively. When pupils need extra help to manage their emotions and settle to learning, they receive it swiftly. This nurturing approach has improved the wellbeing and sense of belonging for pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure view of the school's strengths and the role that they play in pupils' life and their local community. They typically identify the right priorities and they are generally able to make a positive difference. Since the previous inspection, they have taken decisive action to improve curriculum subject leadership and the personal development offer. Pupils are beginning to benefit from the changes that leaders have made.

Governors, including those who are new to the role, understand and carry out their statutory duties effectively. Their knowledge of the complexity of needs within the school, especially for pupils who may face challenges in their lives, means that they stay focused on making decisions in the best interest of all pupils. Governors have developed their understanding of the quality of education and care. They have introduced appropriate actions to seek assurances of the impact of leaders' work. For example, they check how leaders are improving attendance rates with greater precision. Consequently, they are able to ask insightful questions to hold leaders to account.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They hold leaders in high esteem for providing thoughtful wellbeing support. Leaders provide training that further develops staff while balancing their workload. Staff feel valued by leaders.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They appreciate the support that they receive, such as a welcoming smile as they bring their children to school or access to the 'community shed', where they can pick up subsidised essential household items.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a well-thought-out programme to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They have expertly considered the knowledge, skills and opportunities that they want pupils to experience through their school journey. Leaders provide an appropriate curriculum, focused assemblies and external visitors to enhance this programme. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or

disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, develop respect for others and real curiosity about the world beyond their own community.

Pupils learn about different faiths and ways of life, such as same-sex families. They reflect on their own beliefs and experiences. Pupils know that discrimination is never acceptable. They understand the importance of treating others fairly and develop a secure sense of right and wrong. Pupils take part in class votes and elect representatives to the school council, which helps them understand how democracy works. They have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values.

Pupils understand how to build healthy relationships and how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They are well equipped with knowledge about potential age-related risks in modern society, such as the use of artificial intelligence and the dangers of knife crime. Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried. Well-trained staff help pupils to recognise their emotions and make healthy choices. Pastoral support is highly effective. This helps pupils to feel settled and ready to learn.

Pupils know how the 'Rivacre Valley Superheroes' approach helps them build cooperation skills, resilience and responsibility. Pupils take part in a range of clubs, trips and visits that broaden their experience of the arts, sport and their local community. Leaders check pupils' participation regularly to make sure that pupils who need support are able to take part. These opportunities help pupils to develop the confidence that they need for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not as well prepared as they should be for their next stage of education. This is because gaps in their learning do not close quickly enough. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check remains below the national average.

Pupils' work shows that they typically gain the knowledge that is intended across the curriculum. However, some pupils retain gaps in their phonics knowledge and handwriting skills. This limits how well they write about what they have learned in other subjects.

By the time that pupils leave this school, they typically secure the essential knowledge and skills that they need. In national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils’ attainment is in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils attain as well as other disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. However, they do not use this information consistently well to match

activities to what pupils already know and can do. Teachers move some pupils on to more complex work before they have secured earlier knowledge, such as letter formation and sentence construction. This leads to gaps in learning that are not addressed. At times, teachers do not use the information that leaders provide about pupils' barriers to learning well enough. This hinders teachers from adapting their teaching to support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who find learning more difficult.

Leaders have adapted an ambitious curriculum to be suitable for pupils in mixed-aged classes. They generally understand what is working well. Changes to some subjects mean that they are now mapped out to identify the key knowledge and skills that pupils will learn. Leaders make sure that the curriculum is language rich and provides activities to develop pupils' spoken English.

In mathematics, teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and understanding of number patterns. Staff deliver the phonics programme well and benefit from ongoing training and support. They are confident in knowing how best to support pupils who are learning to read and encourage a love of literature.

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

This school is at the heart of its community. Pupils get off to a positive start each day, greeted by staff who know them well. They have a secure sense of belonging. Pupils attend school more regularly than in the past. Many pupils benefit from the well-considered, nurturing and targeted pastoral programme. Those who have additional barriers to their wellbeing receive skilful support from well-trained staff. Pupils feel happy, cared for and safe. They know that staff will listen if they have a worry. Through secure and positive relationships, pupils trust staff to help and guide them.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful and they treat each other kindly. Pupils know the difference between bullying and a disagreement with a friend. Leaders take effective action to stop any unsafe or unacceptable behaviour, including incidents of bullying.

Pupils enjoy learning. They talk enthusiastically about what they have learned recently. At times, pupils who have barriers to their learning do not get the support that they need in the classroom. This is because their needs and starting points have not been carefully considered when designing learning activities. As a result, they do not secure some essential learning or catch up quickly if they have gaps in what they know and can do. Some pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps in education as they should be.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities to develop socially, morally and emotionally. Through character-building sessions in school, pupils develop skills such as teamwork, cooperation and resilience. They know how this helps them to become confident and responsible future citizens. Through assemblies, lessons and listening to visitors to the school, pupils learn how to keep safe in the local area and in the virtual world. They recognise risks, including those online, and how to protect themselves from harm with

maturity. Pupils leave Rivacre Valley with the knowledge and practical skills to be successful in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they monitor pupils’ barriers to learning with greater precision so that classroom support is well matched and having an impact.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers make effective use of assessment to identify gaps in pupils’ writing and provide effective support, so that they catch up quickly.
- Leaders should make sure that teachers use the information that they have about pupils' barriers to learning to match activities more closely to pupils’ needs and starting points.

About this inspection

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

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

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 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.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

The school runs nursery provision for children aged 3 and 4 years.

Headteacher: Kate Docherty

Lead inspector:
Emily Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Nicky Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Hewson, 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

339
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

310
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)

33.45%
Close to 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

6.49%
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

15.93%
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

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	51%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	71%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	61%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	44%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	60%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	93%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	47%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	65%	60%	Close to average

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	52%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	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)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	44%	68%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	69%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-21 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	93%	81%	13 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	80%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	78%	-13 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	52%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	78%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 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%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	37%	79%	-43 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	79%	-24 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)	8.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.5%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	26.5%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	31.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.4%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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