

Heather Garth Primary School Academy

Address: Billingley View, Bolton-on-Deane, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S63 8ES

Unique reference number (URN): 139748

Inspection report: 30 June 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to promote the school's expectations. They have established a clear set of actions to challenge absence. Leaders effectively identify patterns of absence and barriers to regular attendance. They use this information to take swift action and provide targeted support for pupils and their families.

Leaders and pupils work together to develop rewards for positive attendance and punctuality. Weekly celebrations ensure that attendance has a high profile across the school. This motivates pupils to develop positive attitudes towards attendance and punctuality. As a result, pupils' attendance, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is above the national average.

Staff know pupils well. They have positive relationships with pupils. Pupils are respectful and behave well. They support one another and understand that everyone is different and has individual needs. Pupils generally have positive attitudes towards learning. Leaders ensure that staff provide effective support for pupils. This helps pupils to express their emotions, manage their behaviour and engage positively with their peers. Records show that bullying is rare. When incidents do occur, pupils are confident that adults deal with them promptly and effectively. Leaders promote a positive culture where pupils feel valued and ready to learn.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. Leaders have a thorough understanding of children's starting points. They make checks on children's learning and use these well to identify next steps. Staff carefully design activities that help children to develop the skills they will need to prepare them for the next stage of their education. This means that children make effective progress through the curriculum from their individual starting points. Staff adapt activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps children to fully engage in all areas of learning.

Adults form positive relationships with children, providing a nurturing environment in which they can learn. They ensure that the early years welfare requirements are met, which means that children are safe in the setting.

Adults focus on language development and model how to use a wide range of everyday vocabulary. This is evident in the lively conversations that take place as children access activities, such as making mud pies and travelling on imaginary train journeys to the seaside. Adults ensure that daily teaching helps children to build their knowledge of phonics and number. Children readily apply this knowledge across different areas of learning. Staff support children to hone their skills so that they are ready to make a positive start in Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Heather Garth Primary is a welcoming, inclusive school. From the early years, staff build positive relationships that help them to know pupils and their families well. Leaders are committed to removing barriers that impact on pupils' learning and participation in school life, whatever the cause. They are generally successful in doing this.

Leaders use effective systems to identify pupils' needs quickly. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support that they need to thrive. This includes working with the virtual school to support pupils who are looked after or who are open to social care.

Typically, staff ensure that pupils with additional needs and barriers to their learning receive appropriate provision so that they are fully included in lessons and wider opportunities. Pupils have access to resources that help them to engage well with school life. This includes pastoral support. Individual support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities show that the school liaises well with parents and carers to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need to access education.

Leaders use additional funding, such as pupil premium funding, effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. This is helping these pupils to attend school regularly and achieve well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has developed a varied programme to promote pupils' personal development. This is underpinned by the school's vision of lifelong learning and personal wellbeing. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and emotional development. Pupils receive opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world, healthy lifestyles and relationships. Through assemblies, they acquire an understanding of fundamental British values and people with characteristics that are protected by law.

The school's welcoming ethos is evident in pupils' appreciation of how to treat everyone fairly. Through visits and religious education, pupils learn about a range of religions and world views. They recognise features of some faiths, but their knowledge in this area is not detailed.

Pupils learn how to recognise risk and keep themselves safe in the local community. They take part in road and water safety lessons and learn how to cycle safely. Leaders show a commitment to helping pupils develop as individuals who have ambitions and goals. Visitors, including former pupils and professionals from a range of careers, regularly share their experiences with pupils. These opportunities help pupils to think about their future aspirations.

Pupils value the range of leadership opportunities that are available to them. They readily apply for roles as school and eco councillors, digital leaders and sports ambassadors. Leaders ensure that these roles have a positive impact on life in school. For example, school councillors help to develop reward systems for attendance, and digital leaders support their peers to keep safe online.

Leaders ensure that pastoral support is an entitlement for all. Pupils explain that they feel well cared for. They feel safe in school and know who the trusted adults are that will help them if they have worries or concerns. Leaders take effective action to ensure that all pupils can access the offer for personal development.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils generally secure the phonics skills needed to become competent readers. This is reflected in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check. However, staff do not ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, secure other important skills that they need to achieve well across the curriculum. Pupils' work shows that errors persist over time because teachers do not identify and correct them quickly. For example, some pupils repeatedly spell common words incorrectly or have inconsistencies in their handwriting. This limits pupils' attainment in national tests and means they are not as prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be.

Pupils generally attain in line with the national average in national tests. This is reflected in published outcomes at the end of Year 6 for reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The curriculum is coherently sequenced across different subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. In most lessons, learning builds on pupils' prior knowledge. However, leaders have not acted swiftly enough to deal with inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Some lessons do not meet the needs of all pupils effectively. Teachers do not consistently check for misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils do not routinely develop the fluency and accuracy in basic skills that they need to succeed across the curriculum.

Some of the targets and strategies outlined on individual support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not align precisely with pupils' learning needs. Consequently, there is variability in the effectiveness of support that pupils with SEND receive in lessons.

Pupils value the support they receive. They recognise that greater consistency in teaching and regular feedback from teachers would help them to make better progress through the curriculum.

Staff teach the phonics programme effectively. Pupils who fall behind with phonics receive timely support to help them to catch up. Pupils develop their early reading skills and secure the foundations needed to become confident, fluent readers. Leaders place the development of language and vocabulary at the heart of the curriculum. A focus on high-quality stories and texts in all classrooms helps pupils to develop a love of reading.

While leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for development, they have not acted swiftly enough to secure improvements in some areas of the school's work. For example, there is variability in the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, pupils do not achieve as highly as they potentially could. Where leaders do take action, they do not consistently check that this has the intended impact on pupils.

Those responsible for governance understand their statutory duties, but they do not challenge leaders sufficiently to bring about improvement in the school. They recognise this and are working to improve it.

Leaders and trustees have a secure understanding of the school's context. They are ambitious for the children in their care and work hard to develop positive meaningful relationships with families and the community. Trustees, alongside leaders, promote the school's vision and ethos. This helps to create a culture of respect, fairness and kindness.

Leaders ensure that staff access a wide range of training and professional development opportunities. They promote staff wellbeing and give due regard to workload when making decisions. Leaders actively foster partnerships with the local authority, nearby schools and local trusts. These partnerships provide access to a broad range of support. They enable leaders to evaluate the school's work, share effective practice and remain informed about developments in education.

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

Pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued within the school community. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Each day begins with a warm welcome, helping pupils settle positively into their learning. Pupils are confident in sharing any concerns with trusted adults, knowing they will receive support. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the community.

Although most pupils attain well in national tests, there is variability in how well staff teach the curriculum across the school. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff do not consistently identify and fill gaps in pupils' basic skills. This means that errors in, for example, letter formation and punctuation persist over time. This affects pupils' preparedness for the next stage of their education. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not acted swiftly enough to deal with these weaknesses in the quality of education.

In the early years, staff encourage children to become confident, independent learners. Through active play, children develop important social skills, build resilience and learn the value of perseverance when faced with challenges.

Throughout the school day, pupils demonstrate good manners and treat one another with respect. When pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, they receive sensitive support from specialist staff.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to learn about the world beyond the school gates. The curriculum is adapted to reflect local issues and experiences. For example, pupils revisit topics such as racism to deepen their understanding of tolerance, equality and acceptance. A range of educational visits, themed days and weeks and visitors to school broaden pupils' experiences. As a result, pupils gain growing knowledge of different careers, opportunities and lifestyles. In the broader curriculum, pupils benefit from a range of clubs that help them develop their creative and sporting talents.

Next steps

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, should ensure that they take swift and effective action to deal with areas of the school's work that fall short of their high expectations so that pupils achieve their full potential.
 - Leaders should ensure that they support staff to teach the curriculum consistently well across all subjects and to use timely assessment to make changes to teaching where necessary.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff identify and address gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills swiftly so that pupils are better prepared for their next stage of education.
 - Leaders should ensure that the adaptations which teachers make for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are precisely matched to individual needs to support pupils to achieve well across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills within the offer for personal development, particularly in relation to knowledge and understanding of different faiths.
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About this inspection

The school is a standalone academy. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daryl Bennett.

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 leaders, trustees, staff, parents and carers and pupils during the inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has nursery provision that admits children from the term after their third birthday.

Lead inspector:

Steven Holmes, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Judy Shaw, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Higginbottom, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

233

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

200

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)

38.94%

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

2.15%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

26.61%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	23%	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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	69%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	23%	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	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	68%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	85%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	41%	68%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	23%	66%	-43 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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	69%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	80%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	23%	78%	-55 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	51%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	78%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	77%	-39 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	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	85%	81%	4 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	79%	-16 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 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)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.9%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.3%	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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