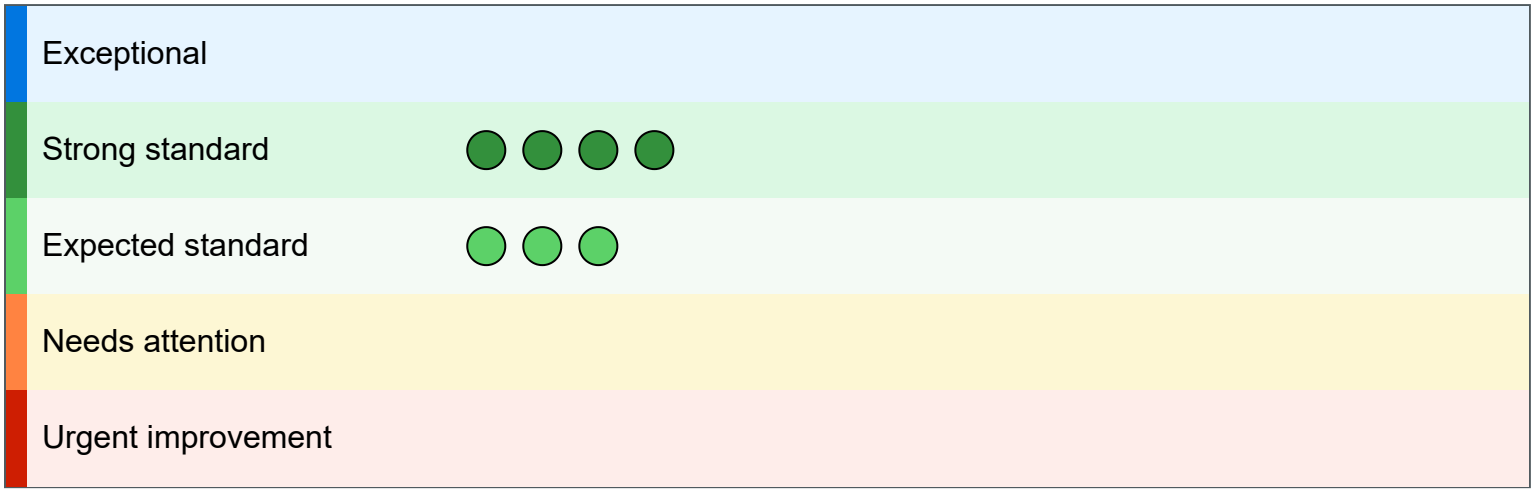
Alt Academy

Address: Alt Lane, Oldham, Lancashire, OL8 2EL

Unique reference number (URN): 141333

Inspection report: 6 October 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.

Strong standard

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have made astute decisions when designing their curriculum. They have prioritised communication alongside reading, writing and mathematics. This helps all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who are learning English as an additional language, to deepen their learning across the curriculum. Leaders recognise that many pupils require additional support to develop foundations in early reading, writing and mathematics. In key stage 1, leaders ensure that pupils have the opportunity to work in focused groups to develop the key knowledge that they need. In addition, they have carefully considered the opportunities for pupils to practise skills such as handwriting, spelling and number through independent choice-based activities. Pupils access this learning well and build their knowledge and skills securely over time.

Leaders have strengthened their use of assessment. Staff consistently use questioning and feedback well to deepen pupils' learning, and pupils respond well to effective questioning. If pupils have gaps in their learning, staff skilfully adapt teaching to support them. They successfully use strategies to include all pupils in lessons, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps them to access their learning independently and with confidence. Pupils participate confidently in lessons and contribute thoughtfully to discussions. They remain focused on learning and respond positively to teachers' questioning and feedback.

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders prioritise the early years to ensure that children make effective progress in their development. Staff get to know children and their families quickly. This helps them to design a curriculum which supports children's next steps in their learning. Leaders prioritise communication and physical development. Consequently, children become increasingly confident communicators and develop independence. For example, children in the provision for 2-year-olds take delight in taking turns to bathe and dress the dolls. As they move into the Nursery Year, they proudly change into waterproof clothing and wellingtons before washing the bikes at the 'bike wash'.

Leaders have also focused on developing children's social and mathematical skills. They have provided training for staff to enhance these opportunities. As a result, children take turns and share blocks when building bridges and castles in construction play. Staff skilfully extend children's language during play through carefully chosen questions and discussions. This helps them to develop their vocabulary.

Reading is prioritised across the early years. Younger children enjoy songs and rhymes and they join in enthusiastically. Children in the Reception Year learn letter sounds quickly, and by the end of the year they can read simple words and sentences. Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, quickly become confident learners and develop the skills needed to access Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have created an inclusive culture which embraces all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders build strong partnerships with parents and carers through regular family engagement opportunities. For example, leaders provide parent groups and workshops that help families support their children's learning and development. These relationships help leaders get to know pupils well. As a result, they identify any additional needs meticulously and remove barriers to learning.

Staff are highly skilled at adapting provision for pupils with SEND. They make good use of the quality training that leaders provide to put effective support in place. This enables pupils to access learning successfully alongside their peers with growing independence. For some pupils with education, health and care plans, leaders have created well-designed provision. This helps pupils to feel calm and safe at school. They successfully make progress towards their individual goals. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to support pupils who are known to social care. These pupils receive timely and well-coordinated support that helps them to engage successfully in school. Leaders also use additional funding well to help disadvantaged pupils take part in a range of enrichment opportunities, including trips and visits. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of the world.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders' well-planned approach to personal development begins in the early years. Children are given the opportunity to experience '50 things to do before you turn 5'. These opportunities have been carefully designed to broaden children's experiences and help them to develop confidence from an early age. Older pupils benefit from 'the harmony pledge'. They enthusiastically describe how they fulfil this pledge every year. For example, they proudly recount how they fundraise for charity through sponsored events and regularly perform on stage for audiences inside and outside of school. These events instil pride and confidence in pupils.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of the fundamental British values and practise values such as democracy when voting for representatives on the pupil leadership groups. Pupils proudly wear coloured sweatshirts as they take on lead roles as ambassadors for friendship, mental health and reading. Through these roles, they contribute positively to school life and support their peers.

Pupils celebrate difference and recognise the wide diversity within the community. Their cultural heritages are celebrated through displays around school. Pupils are keen to point out the variety of flags representing their backgrounds. This instils a sense of belonging within the school community, which is echoed through pupil and parent voice.

Leaders are aware of the risks some pupils may face and have designed a bespoke personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, confidently articulate how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to stay safe online and in the community and develop a secure knowledge of healthy relationships. Leaders have ensured there is a targeted approach to wellbeing. Beyond the general offer, leaders work with agencies to remove barriers some

pupils may have. For example, they work alongside the emergency services and mentoring providers to support some pupils. This helps pupils to manage their emotions and keep themselves safe in the community.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Although many pupils face barriers to their learning, they progress well through the curriculum and achieve well at the end of key stage 2. They are increasingly well prepared for their next steps in education. At the end of Year 6, pupils attain in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Younger pupils secure foundational knowledge in early reading, writing and mathematics well and attain above national averages in the Year 4 multiplication tables check. While most pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of key stage 2, fewer pupils attain the higher standard in writing than is the case nationally.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils develop secure knowledge. For example, in science, they recall their learning confidently and explain how to make a variety of electrical circuits. In history, they independently describe which countries the Romans conquered and when.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are greeted by warm smiles at the school gate and happily join their classes. Leaders place high importance on school attendance. In the past, the attendance of some pupils has been low. However, following effective intervention from staff and leaders, most pupils now attend school regularly. Leaders use systems well to monitor the attendance of pupils and intervene quickly when pupils do not attend school. They work closely with parents and carers to improve attendance routines and provide tailored support when there are barriers to attending school. Leaders' efforts have also led to reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders are resolute in their ambition to improve attendance further as they know this will improve outcomes for all pupils.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They value their school and are proud of one another and their community. Classrooms are calm and pupils are active participants in their learning. They are highly respectful in their interactions. For example, they hold doors open, use polite manners and move calmly around the building. Staff use well-embedded behaviour routines seamlessly and pupils respond well. At social times, pupils play together kindly. Staff join in their games and they model the school values at all times. Bullying is rare and pupils are wholly confident that staff will deal with any falling-out that may occur.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders are committed to improving outcomes for pupils. They know pupils, their families and the community well and have a thorough understanding of the barriers some pupils face. Leaders at all levels use information well to understand the school's strengths and identify priorities for improvement. When priorities are identified, leaders provide staff with appropriate training and support to help secure improvements. For example, leaders have recently developed toolkits to improve the consistency of teaching. They have also supported staff to use pupil assessments to carefully refine teaching approaches. Staff are proud to work at the school, and value the support and professional development that leaders provide. Staff appreciate the focus leaders and trustees place on reducing workload and maintaining positive wellbeing.

The trust provides the school with considerable expertise. Leaders work closely with the trust on projects and initiatives designed to improve pupils' outcomes. Recently, there has been a focus on developing subject leaders. This has enabled leaders to evaluate individual subjects and year groups effectively. Trustees maintain clear oversight of the school's performance and outcomes. They are knowledgeable about their roles and use a range of strategies to support the school and successfully hold leaders to account. Parents and carers appreciate the community focus the school provides. They feel that their children are well cared for and supported to achieve well.

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

Pupils feel a keen sense of belonging at this school. They are welcomed by committed staff who know them well. Pupils start their day with assemblies that bring them together. They sing as a whole school, join in enthusiastically with the actions and relish the sense of togetherness that this creates. Pupils and their families develop positive relationships with staff and leaders and quickly become part of the school's welcoming community, where everybody is valued and included. Pupils know that they are important and treasured by staff, who strive to give them a wide range of opportunities. Trips and visits enrich pupils' lives and broaden their experiences. These opportunities help pupils to build their confidence, develop new interests and make memories that they talk about with pride.

Pupils know what is expected of them and rise to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. They care for one another and celebrate the range of cultural differences within their community. Overall, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Bullying is rare and staff deal with any unkindness well. Pupils trust adults to listen to them and to act quickly if they have a worry, so they feel safe and happy in school.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They contribute well in lessons and enjoy activities such as role play and drama. For example, in a history lesson, pupils enjoyed asking the 'Roman soldier' all about his experiences. Younger pupils enjoy learning through play. For example, at playtime, they work cooperatively to investigate how to channel water through guttering and pipes. They enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils achieve well across the school and are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed their approach to assessment across the curriculum so that teachers identify and address pupils' gaps in learning consistently and more pupils attain the higher standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders should continue their work to refine and target their attendance strategies so that attendance for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, continues to rise.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Harmony Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Antony Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew McCully.

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

The inspection took place on 6 and 7 October 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 school and trust leaders, those responsible for governance, staff, pupils and parents during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nicola Grady

Lead inspector:
Jo Costello, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Sarah Gower-Jones, Ofsted Inspector
Graham Hamilton, 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

343
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

335
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)

58.58%
Well above 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

5.54%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.49%
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

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	40%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	47%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	56%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	72%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	51%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	73%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	30%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	37%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	41%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	46%	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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	41%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	39%	59%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	30%	69%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-35 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	37%	81%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	41%	78%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	78%	-31 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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	41%	81%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	39%	79%	-40 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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
2025/26 (1 term)	4.7%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.8%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	13.1%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	18.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	25.7%	14.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright