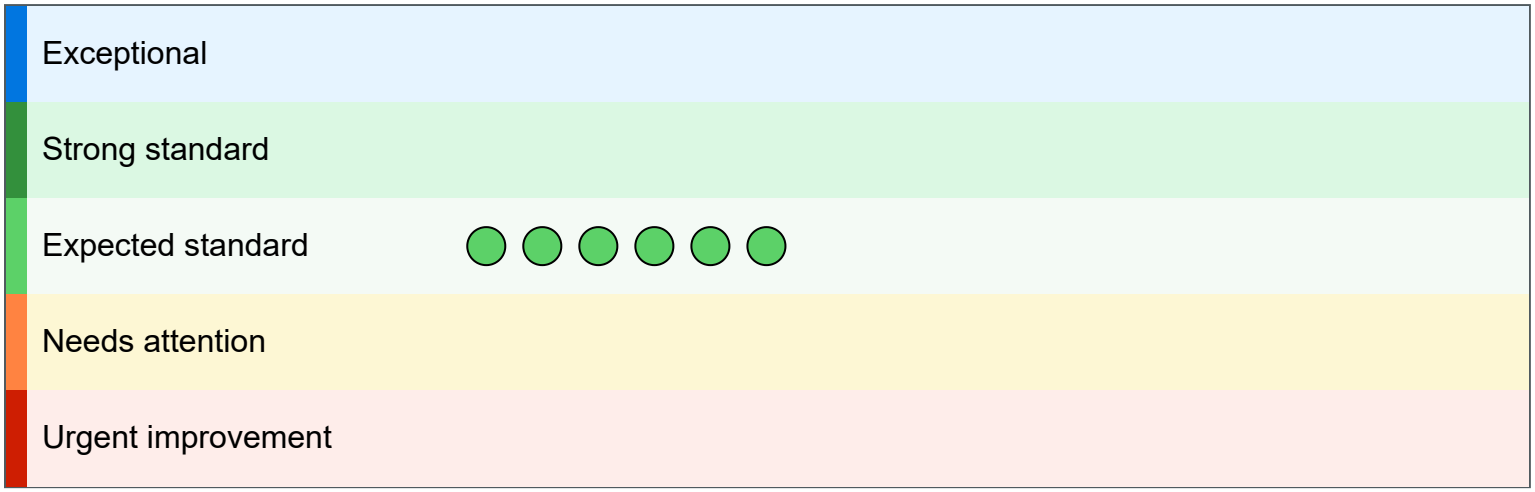
Harper Green School

Address: Harper Green Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 0DH

Unique reference number (URN): 143772

Inspection report: 9 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

Achievement

Expected standard

Many pupils join and leave the school at different points in their education. Despite this, disadvantaged pupils typically achieve well across a range of subjects over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care generally make the progress that they should from their starting points.

The published data at the end of Year 11 indicates that pupils' overall attainment is close to average in recent years. Pupils' attainment in a small number of subjects has been below average. However, this does not fully reflect the achievement of pupils at the school. This is because many pupils join and leave the school at different times of the school year. Typically, the progress that pupils make by the time they leave key stage 4 matches the national average.

Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language or who find reading difficult, are helped to gain the essential knowledge and skills they need to access the curriculum.

Across the curriculum, pupils generally recall and apply important knowledge well. Their work is typically of high quality. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have a relentless focus on attendance. They identify concerns early through detailed analysis of attendance patterns. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to support pupils to improve their attendance. Support includes a mentoring programme. It is having a positive impact, with many pupils improving their attendance rates. Overall attendance rates are broadly in line with national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities was above national averages last year.

Leaders have established a positive culture where pupils feel a sense of belonging. It is underpinned by clear routines and high expectations. In addition, staff demonstrate a genuine interest in pupils as individuals. They get to know them well and celebrate their successes. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. When it happens, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.

The introduction of initiatives such as golden tickets, VIP awards and ethos assemblies has strengthened pupils' engagement with the school's values. Lessons proceed without unnecessary interruption. Pupils typically respond appropriately to teachers' instructions and engage positively with their learning.

A range of strategies, including pastoral support, has helped pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Suspension rates have reduced.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have logically ordered subject knowledge in curriculums so that pupils build their understanding over time.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. The curriculum is typically taught well. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They generally provide clear explanations and model new learning carefully.

Teachers design tasks that help pupils engage positively with learning. However, occasionally, these tasks do not consistently enable pupils to deepen their knowledge.

Staff typically demonstrate a secure understanding of pupils' additional needs. In the main, teachers make appropriate adaptations for pupils, including scaffolding, sentence starters and structured questioning. This means that vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can typically access learning successfully.

On the whole, teachers check pupils' understanding of concepts and modify teaching appropriately. However, at times, misconceptions are not addressed sufficiently well and teachers move on to new work before pupils are ready.

Leaders have established a clear and ambitious approach to secure pupils' essential knowledge and skills, including in reading and mathematics. Leaders use a range of strategies to support those pupils who find reading difficult. This helps them to become fluent and confident readers.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders are deeply committed to providing an inclusive environment where every pupil can succeed regardless of their background or additional needs. Leaders have established effective systems to identify pupils' needs accurately and early.

Leaders have strengthened staff's awareness of pupils' individual barriers to learning. This helps to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need. Staff make appropriate adaptations to learning, including for pupils who join the school having missed periods of education. Parents, carers and external professionals help shape personalised support.

Leaders' work to support pupils who are new to speaking English as an additional language is particularly effective. Appropriate strategies help these pupils develop communication skills and access the curriculum.

Leaders' provision for pupils who face disadvantage is rooted in diagnosis, research evidence and ongoing evaluation. Leaders' actions reduce barriers to learning and participation in school events. As a result, disadvantaged pupils attend regularly and progress well from their starting points.

Pupils known to children's social care are cared for well. Leaders work with the virtual school to meet individual needs and secure mental health support to promote their wellbeing

effectively.

Leaders ensure that pupils accessing alternative provision receive a suitable educational experience. Pupils benefit from carefully planned placements that support their academic and personal development.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders demonstrate a reflective approach to improvement. They identify appropriate priorities through well-established processes. Leaders make decisions that consider the needs of all pupils, including those who are vulnerable. Pupils are encouraged to feel valued, take pride in their achievements and contribute positively to the life of the school.

Trustees and members of the local governing body use their wide range of relevant skills and experience to assure themselves of what is happening in the school. They demonstrate an appropriate knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Trustees and local governors fulfil their statutory duties. They support and challenge leaders well.

Staff are very positive about how leaders promote their wellbeing and workload. Staff feel that leaders are approachable and know that they can raise their concerns with them.

Leaders ensure that staff benefit from access to high-quality professional learning that is aligned to school priorities. There is a positive culture of professional collaboration between staff. There are many opportunities for staff to share effective practice, including working closely with other schools in the trust.

Leaders work well with external professionals and organisations to prepare pupils for their next steps. For example, leaders have established a relationship with a national construction company. This has helped them launch a new vocational course.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The personal development programme includes opportunities for pupils to develop into responsible and resilient individuals. It promotes the school’s values of participation, working hard and doing the right thing.

Pupils understand how to stay safe both online and offline. They recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils learn about the risks linked to substance misuse. Leaders respond appropriately to emerging safeguarding and contextual issues by adjusting curriculum content when necessary.

Pupils show a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They connect democracy and the rule of law to everyday expectations in school. This helps pupils to become responsible and informed citizens. Pupils respect differences and show tolerance towards others. They value learning about different religions and beliefs.

Pupils access a range of enrichment opportunities. These activities broaden their interests and wider life skills. These include inclusive sports events, mental health days, a domestic abuse conference and visits to the fire service. Leaders take practical steps to remove

barriers to participation for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, leaders liaise with medical teams to support pupils with medical needs in taking part in competitions.

Trips and visits provide valuable experiences that support pupils' curriculum learning. Examples include chemistry, geography and history workshops and physics competitions.

Pupils benefit from clear, well-informed careers guidance and opportunities from Year 7 onwards. Pupils gain valuable insight from the school's careers fair and organised visits to local colleges, employers and universities. These help them to make informed decisions about their future. An increasing number of pupils move on to appropriate education or training programmes.

Leaders have established a culture where pupils feel cared for and listened to. Pupils speak positively about the support available for mental health and wellbeing. This includes free breakfast provision, healthy eating options and access to quiet study areas. These approaches help pupils feel included, supported and ready to learn.

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

Pupils feel safe and listened to and valued in this welcoming school. Those new to the school settle in quickly. Pupils are proud of the diversity of the school community. They speak enthusiastically about their experiences, particularly the positive relationships they have developed with staff and their peers.

Pupils understand leaders' high expectations of behaviour. This contributes to a calm atmosphere. Pupils conduct themselves appropriately in lessons and breaktimes. They move around the school site sensibly, interacting positively with one another. Pupils consistently show respect for difference and diversity. Derogatory language and bullying are not tolerated. Such incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy learning. Pupils follow a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps into education, employment or training.

Pupils broaden their experiences through 'We Are Harper Week' and house events. They gain a deep sense of belonging and engagement through a wide array of activities. These include sports, drama productions and leadership roles.

Pupils develop social, emotional and thinking skills through clubs, such as board games, fishing and dance. Visits to theatres and museums deepen their empathy and cultural understanding. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award helps pupils develop their sense of teamwork and problem-solving skills. Pupils participate fully in activities because practical and financial barriers are removed. Work experience for Year 10 pupils supports them to develop their employability skills.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to be active citizens. For example, they contribute to their community through an Iftar event during Ramadan and by acting as environmental ambassadors. Participation in the Great British Spring Clean, picking litter outdoors, helps to boost pupils' wellbeing and form good habits.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff routinely identify and address misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Leverhulme Academy Church of England and Community Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Roach, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Horan.

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

This inspection took place from 9 September to 10 September 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders, staff and trust leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO, chair of the trust board, and with members of the local governing committee, including the chair. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke with a virtual school headteacher and a representative of the alternative provider that the school uses.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 registered alternative providers.

Headteacher: Sally Heppenstall

Lead inspector:
Ahmed Marikar, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Chris Glennon, Ofsted Inspector
Marc Heron, Ofsted Inspector
Scott Fletcher, 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 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,070
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: 1,063

School capacity

1,250
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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.57%
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: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.96%
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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.93%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	36.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	35.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.9%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	42.8	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42.9	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.3	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.11	-0.03	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	-0.22	-0.03	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.18	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	24.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	23.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.9	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.35	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.66	-0.57	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.50	-0.55	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	24.2%	53.1%	-29.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	29.9%	53.1%	-23.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	23.2%	52.4%	-29.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.1	50.4	-13.3
2023/24 (final)	39.0	50.0	-11.0
2022/23 (final)	33.9	50.3	-16.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.35	0.16	-0.51
2022/23 (final)	-0.66	0.17	-0.83
2021/22 (final)	-0.50	0.15	-0.65

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	82%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	88%	94%	Below

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)	8.6%	8.4%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	9.0%	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)	25.5%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	29.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	33.1%	26.5%	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