

Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Primary School

Address: Garstang Road North, Wesham, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 3DE

Unique reference number (URN): 119553

Inspection report: 3 February 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.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a very well-considered personal development programme that prepares pupils very effectively for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop secure knowledge of the personal, social and health education curriculum. They learn extensively about healthy relationships, staying safe online and managing their mental health and wellbeing. Pupils learn about diversity and understand and respect differences between people, including those of different religions and beliefs. Pupils have a very secure understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect. They can explain what these values mean in depth and how they apply them in their daily lives.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of meaningful opportunities to develop their character. They take part enthusiastically in clubs including football, choir, drama group and jiu-jitsu. Pupils particularly value residential visits to outdoor centres. These visits help pupils to develop independence, teamwork and resilience.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access all opportunities. They reduce barriers to participation successfully so that every pupil can benefit from the school's varied and stimulating offer.

Pupils value the array of leadership responsibilities available to them, which are prioritised for those pupils who may not otherwise have such opportunities. They relish opportunities to become road safety ambassadors, science ambassadors and school councillors. These roles help pupils to develop confidence, responsibility and leadership skills. Pupils are proud of their school and the opportunities it provides. The school's thoughtfully designed programme helps pupils to become confident, responsible young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Leaders set high expectations for regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and is now above the national average. Pupils arrive at school happy and keen to learn. The breakfast club provides a calm and settled start to the school day for those who need it. Staff check pupils' attendance regularly and diligently. Leaders work effectively with families to understand and address barriers to better attendance. This helps pupils to attend more regularly.

Pupils behave well around the school and work hard in lessons. Routines are well established and help to create a calm and orderly environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Leaders have created a culture where staff know, support and care for pupils. Pupils benefit from sensitive support from staff who know them well. This helps pupils to meet the expectations that staff have for their behaviour and learning. As a result, suspensions have reduced over time. Bullying is rare. When incidents

do occur, staff deal with them swiftly and effectively. This is because leaders have created an environment where any form of discrimination is dealt with quickly. Pupils trust that staff will address any concerns.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a positive start to their education. The curriculum clearly sets out what children will learn. Reading is prioritised from the start. Children in Reception Year learn the sounds that they need to read words successfully. Most children develop secure phonics knowledge by the end of the Reception Year.

Interactions between children and adults are warm, constructive and positive. Staff listen attentively to children and model new words carefully. This helps children to learn important vocabulary. Children are fully engaged in their learning and busy in their play. They communicate confidently with adults and each other. As a result, children remember more of what they learn. This helps them to be ready for Year 1.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to understand what children know and can do when they start school. Staff plan appropriate activities to help children learn new knowledge. Staff support children's wellbeing very effectively. Children feel safe and settled.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture where pupils with different needs are welcomed and valued. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are fully included in all aspects of school life. These pupils benefit from the same opportunities as their peers, including school trips and after-school clubs. Leaders use their knowledge about the difficulties that some pupils face to work closely with staff and families to provide support. Leaders use appropriate processes to identify these pupils' needs and reduce any barriers to their learning.

Staff receive helpful training to support vulnerable pupils, such as how best to modify their teaching to support pupils with SEND. Staff work closely with pupils and parents and carers. They draw on external expertise where appropriate. Staff use their knowledge to meet individual needs with success.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully. The pupil premium strategy is informed by research and shapes the school's improvement priorities. However, teachers do not routinely use the information they gather to tackle the things that some pupils find hardest. For example, they do not consistently address errors in spelling or handwriting. As a result, these gaps persist for some disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's context and have identified clear priorities for improvement. These include improving attendance and pupils' achievement. Leaders have taken purposeful action to address these priorities, for example by introducing robust attendance procedures and support for pupils' behaviour. Recently, these actions

have borne fruit. For example, absences and incidents of serious misbehaviour have decreased.

Leaders are aware that teaching is not consistently effective across the school. They have taken appropriate steps to address this through high-quality professional development for staff. This work is beginning to strengthen teaching practice. For instance, staff receive training to adapt teaching for pupils with additional needs. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing when introducing changes. This helps staff to feel valued and supported. Staff feel proud to work at the school.

Governance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Governors understand the school and its community well. They ask well-informed questions to hold leaders to account effectively. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, including by having rigorous oversight of safeguarding, finances and statutory compliance. They ensure that leaders' decisions are made in pupils' best interests, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils, particularly older pupils, have gaps in their learning. This prevents them building secure knowledge over time. At times, pupils struggle to recall key information. While they remember their most recent learning, their recollection of topics covered longer ago is less secure. Across the curriculum, some pupils do not develop detailed and well-connected knowledge over time.

Year 6 pupils in 2025 achieved broadly in line with the national average in their end-of-key-stage tests. An above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check. On the whole, pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. However, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have gaps in their fundamental writing skills. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teachers' checks on some pupils' learning do not routinely identify gaps in their knowledge well. This hinders leaders from ensuring that the curriculum fills these gaps, particularly for older pupils. Additionally, some activities are not well matched to what pupils already know. As a result, teaching does not build systematically on what pupils know and can do.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have adopted a new curriculum. The curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced for all pupils. Reading is prioritised across the school through phonics teaching. Teachers are reading experts and know how to teach the reading curriculum adeptly. Teachers provide timely support for pupils who struggle. Teachers extend pupils' vocabulary by introducing new words. They revisit these words to help pupils remember them more precisely.

Leaders and staff plan and implement helpful adaptations to teaching. These help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who face other difficulties, to learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders make careful checks on pupils' progress, which enables them to adjust support when needed.

Some pupils, particularly older pupils and those who are disadvantaged, have persistent errors in spelling, handwriting and grammar. Teachers spot these errors, however they do not address them quickly. As a result, these pupils cannot build on what they learned before.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Primary School. They attend school regularly. Pupils appreciate seeing their friends each day. They take part enthusiastically in an array of valued opportunities available, such as sports, music and drama. These opportunities are available to all. Pupils remember interesting trips and residential visits warmly. These experiences help them to develop their social skills and confidence.

The school wants the best for its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Some pupils, particularly older pupils, have gaps in their knowledge from previous years. These gaps are not identified consistently and so can remain unaddressed. As a result, pupils can struggle to use what they have learned when tackling new work. Some pupils have persistent errors in spelling and handwriting. This limits their ability to build secure knowledge and skills over time.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know they can talk to adults if they have worries or concerns. Staff greet pupils warmly at the start of each day. This particularly helps children in the early years to quickly settle into school life. The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils understand that it is important to treat everyone fairly. They learn about different faiths and cultures. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered around the school. They treat each other with respect. Bullying is rare, and pupils know that adults will help if problems arise. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as helping younger children and representing the school at events. These experiences help them to grow in confidence. Pupils welcome new classmates and help them to feel part of the school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should sharpen their assessment systems so that staff can make precise changes to their curriculum delivery that help pupils build secure knowledge over time.

- Leaders should ensure that teachers address gaps in pupils' handwriting and spelling promptly and effectively.
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About this inspection

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 the headteacher and the deputy headteacher during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout the inspection. They also spoke to some parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

A new leadership team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have been appointed since the previous inspection.

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in June 2023.

Headteacher: Claire Panther

Lead inspector:

Mark Hazzard, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Ruth Baldwin, His Majesty's 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

136

Below 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)

26.47%

Close to 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

7.35%

Well 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.03%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	37%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	81%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	74%	Below
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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	13%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	55%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	86%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	38%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	86%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	38%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	71%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	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 (revised)	71%	69%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	13%	67%	-55 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	66%	-23 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	80%	-42 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	78%	-35 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	59%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	77%	-20 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	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	79%	-54 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	79%	-22 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 (2 term)	6.8%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	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 (2 term)	15.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	18.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	29.0%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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