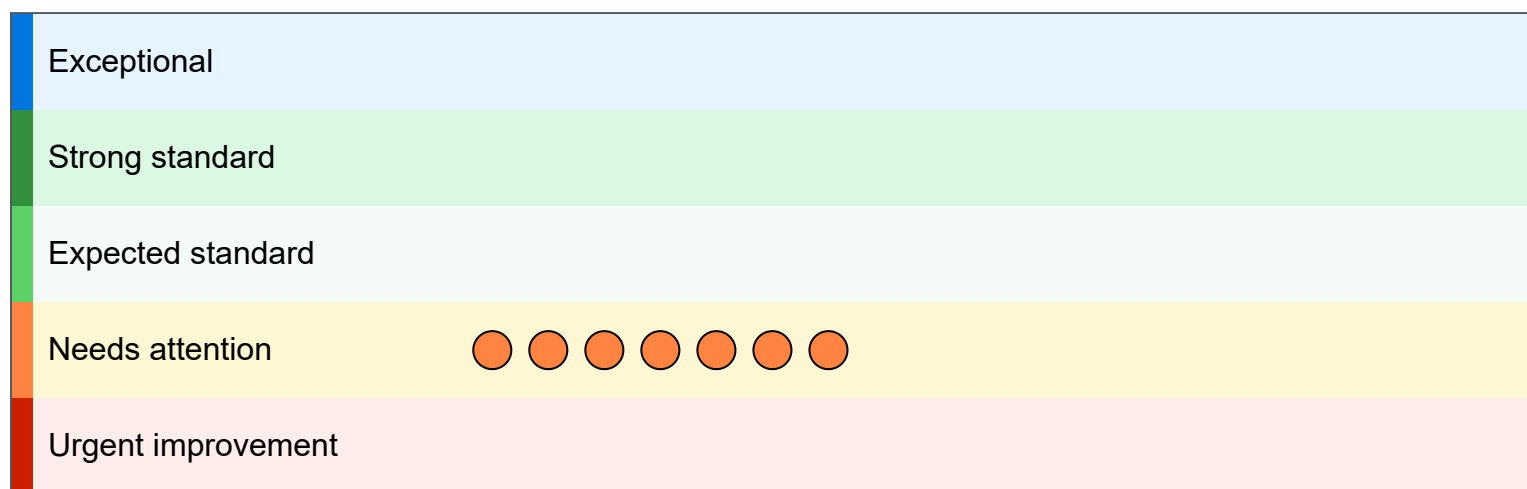


Lark Hill Community Primary School

Address: Liverpool Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, M5 4BJ

Unique reference number (URN): 132147

Inspection report: 10 February 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.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils' achievement in national tests has been below average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics has risen year on year, and in 2025 was broadly average. Disadvantaged pupils consistently achieve outcomes in line with similar pupils nationally. Likewise, attainment in the Year 4 multiplication tables check has improved to be broadly average in 2025. Generally, pupils are suitably prepared for secondary school.

The proportion of pupils meeting the Year 1 phonics screening check standard has remained stubbornly low. It is too early to see the impact of leaders' actions to tackle this. Some pupils do not develop key skills such as spelling and handwriting as quickly as they should. Pupils' progress through the wider curriculum is variable. They remember broad topics they have studied, but some do not secure a deep understanding of concepts over time.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils' attendance has been low. Improvements have been slow. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is stubbornly high. Leaders do not have a secure overview and analysis of the attendance of groups of pupils. They do, however, use a wide range of strategies to secure improvements, successfully removing barriers experienced by individual pupils. This has resulted in increased attendance for individuals and groups of pupils. However, there is more to do to ensure that all groups of pupils have high levels of attendance.

Most pupils usually behave well in class and during break times, but there are times when low level disruption disturbs pupils' learning. Any arguments or incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly. Staff support pupils effectively when these incidents occur. The school is a purposeful and orderly environment where established early morning routines ensure that the day gets off to a calm and meaningful start. Pupils usually treat each other with respect. Any instances of unkindness are dealt with consistently by staff. Staff apply the new behaviour policy effectively. As a result, leaders are beginning to see improvements.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

In some subjects and year groups, the curriculum is not taught consistently well. Leaders' expectations for the quality of pupils' work are not applied consistently across classes. Sometimes, teachers' explanations and questioning are not precise enough to check pupils' understanding securely. At times, misconceptions and errors persist because they are not identified and tackled successfully. Sometimes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not benefit from the adaptations needed to support their progress.

Adults who teach phonics are well trained. They follow the school's chosen programme, but the quality of teaching in phonics is variable, and some pupils do not make the progress they should. The curriculums in some subjects and some phases are new and are still being embedded, particularly in the early years and the specialist classes.

Leaders know where inconsistencies lie, but they lack a precise overview and analysis of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. This reduces their ability to set specific actions for improvement.

In most subjects, curriculum design is clear and structured. There is a shared understanding of the key knowledge that pupils should learn at each stage. Teachers receive suitable information to help them design lessons.

Early years

Needs attention 

The quality of teaching in the early years is inconsistent, including in the teaching of phonics. This impedes children's progress. Staff are trained in teaching phonics and pupils enjoy learning to read. However, their progress is slowed because errors are not picked up quickly. Some adult interactions with children are not of sufficient high quality. They do not develop children's vocabulary, or deepen their thinking, as well as they should. Some children are not as ready for Year 1 as they could be. Leaders have made changes to the early years provision. This includes a revised curriculum, new processes to check how well children are learning and significant building work. Children are benefiting from a more accessible and appropriate environment to play and learn in. It is too soon to see the benefits of changes to the early years curriculum.

Early morning routines are generally well embedded, ensuring a meaningful start to the day. However, at other times, incidents of poor behaviour are not addressed promptly. Adults provide high levels of support, but sometimes this high level of adult direction limits children's independence. Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and carers right from the start of their child's education.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

There are inconsistencies in the ways staff adapt their teaching and the curriculum to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils and staff are over reliant on additional adult support to help some pupils learn. Staff have received appropriate training in specific approaches to support pupils with SEND, but much of this is recent, so the impact of the training on classroom teaching is not clear. In specialist classes for pupils with SEND, the curriculum is new and provision is similarly variable. Leaders typically identify pupils' needs accurately and set out appropriate strategies to support them. However, these strategies are not consistently in place.

Leaders work with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure that they have a full understanding of pupils' needs. Leaders have high ambitions for vulnerable pupils but their oversight and analysis of how well these groups of pupils are performing lacks precision. Those who are disadvantaged, or known to social care, have their needs met well. Effective use of additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils' access to the curriculum and the school's wider offer. There is a highly inclusive culture in this school, pupils with additional needs are welcomed. Alternative provision is used appropriately.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders' plans to improve the school lack some precision. It is not always clear in the plans what, exactly, the key priorities are, or how leaders will know their actions have been effective. However, senior leaders are relatively new to their roles. They have an accurate view of the school's performance. They know where the strengths and weaknesses lie, and are taking appropriate action to tackle areas which need attention.

Governors know that until recently their understanding of the quality of the school's work had been overly positive. They have taken action to address this, attending training and asking increasingly pertinent questions. There is more to do to ensure that governors have an accurate view of the school's work, especially around the quality of curriculum, teaching and achievement. Governors are involved in the life of the school. They receive information about parental views and are increasingly seeking parental feedback themselves.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the local context and the challenges this poses. They are positive role models. They consistently put pupils' wellbeing first, and are acutely aware that a high proportion of pupils face barriers to their learning or are vulnerable. Staff wellbeing and workload are considered carefully when making changes to improve the school. Staff receive appropriate training, including those who are early in their teaching career.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Some pupils do not benefit as much as they should from the personal development programme because it is not delivered consistently well. There are some inconsistencies in the ways that leaders check that pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional barriers, are learning and benefiting from the school's programme.

Leaders' deep understanding of the school's context informs their design of the personal, social and health education curriculum. Additional themes are included when required, for example addressing anti-social behaviour. This ensures that the curriculum remains responsive and relevant. Effective work with other professionals enables pupils to gain an understanding of issues such as vaping, gangs and drug culture.

Relationships, sex and health education is delivered effectively across the school. Parent workshops and assemblies are used effectively to share curriculum content, promote openness and strengthen engagement with families. Pupils learn about a range of online risks such as grooming and catfishing.

Pupils learn to appreciate and respect others' views, beliefs and values. They develop an understanding of democracy, cultural diversity and potential future careers. There is a broad programme of enrichment activities including after-school clubs and trips to places of cultural interest. Support for positive mental health, delivered through sport and physical activity, has engaged pupils well, particularly those who are less comfortable in classroom-based activities. Assemblies and themed weeks, including Mental Health Week and remembrance activities, reinforce belonging and community awareness. Leaders' work to ensure pupils learn about aspects of identity that are protected by law, such as gender and

disabilities, refugee week and anti-racism initiatives, reflects their commitment to inclusion and celebrating difference.

Leaders' work to support pupils' wellbeing is effective. Adults know the pupils and their families well. They provide additional advice and appropriate support.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this school, where they feel safe and cared for. They enjoy their learning, but some do not achieve as well as they should, including in the early years. This is because variability in teaching prevents them from securing a deep understanding of key knowledge. This variability extends to the teaching of personal, social and health education so pupils are not as well prepared for secondary school as they could be. Some pupils have gaps in the basic skills of phonics, handwriting, spelling and early mathematics. Leaders are making changes to tackle these weaknesses and to ensure pupils consistently have the academic knowledge they need, but there is much to do.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. They are well understood. However, the support in lessons for pupils with SEND varies. Staff provide effective help for those who require emotional or pastoral support.

Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They conduct themselves well around the school. Older pupils take their responsibilities, for example as playleaders or school council members, seriously and demonstrate maturity in these roles. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and at break times. Sometimes, however, misbehaviour in class disrupts the learning of others, including in early years. Pupils have confidence in staff to deal quickly with any occasional instances of bullying.

Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers to emphasise the importance of school attendance and remove any barriers pupils are experiencing.

Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a range of enrichment opportunities. They make sure that no one is left out. For example, pupils take part in residential trips and visits to places of cultural interest. Pupils join workshops and presentations which prepare them well for life in the wider community. These develop their understanding of online risks, knife crime and drug culture, for example.

Next steps

- Governors and leaders should ensure that leaders at all levels have clear analysis and sharp oversight of the impact of their work to support pupils, including different pupil groups, in order to enable accurate identification of key priorities and acceleration of the rate of school improvement.

- Leaders should refine their use of attendance data to identify patterns and improve attendance further.
 - Leaders should ensure that across subjects the curriculum is implemented consistently well, including for specialist classes, early years and in personal, social and health education. Leaders should ensure that adaptations identified for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently implemented.
 - Leaders should ensure that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge close quickly and securely, and that teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge are sharpened and misconceptions are identified quickly and tackled effectively.
 - Leaders should ensure that all staff, especially in the early years, engage in high-quality interactions that deepen children's understanding and vocabulary.
 - Leaders should continue to tackle low level disruption that interrupts pupils' learning.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Margaret Woodhouse.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke to some parents and carers. They spoke by telephone with a leader from an alternative provision used by the school to support a small number of pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for up to 14 pupils in key stage 2 who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Paula Warding

Lead inspector:

Gaynor Roberts, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:


Jane Holmes, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Reidel, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Marlow, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

634

Well above 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

[Hide](#)

School capacity

690

Well above 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

[Hide](#)

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

54.15%

Well 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%

[Hide](#)

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

4.42%

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%

[Hide](#)

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.87%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

[Hide](#)

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.

[Hide](#)

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

[Hide](#)

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

[Hide](#)

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.

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