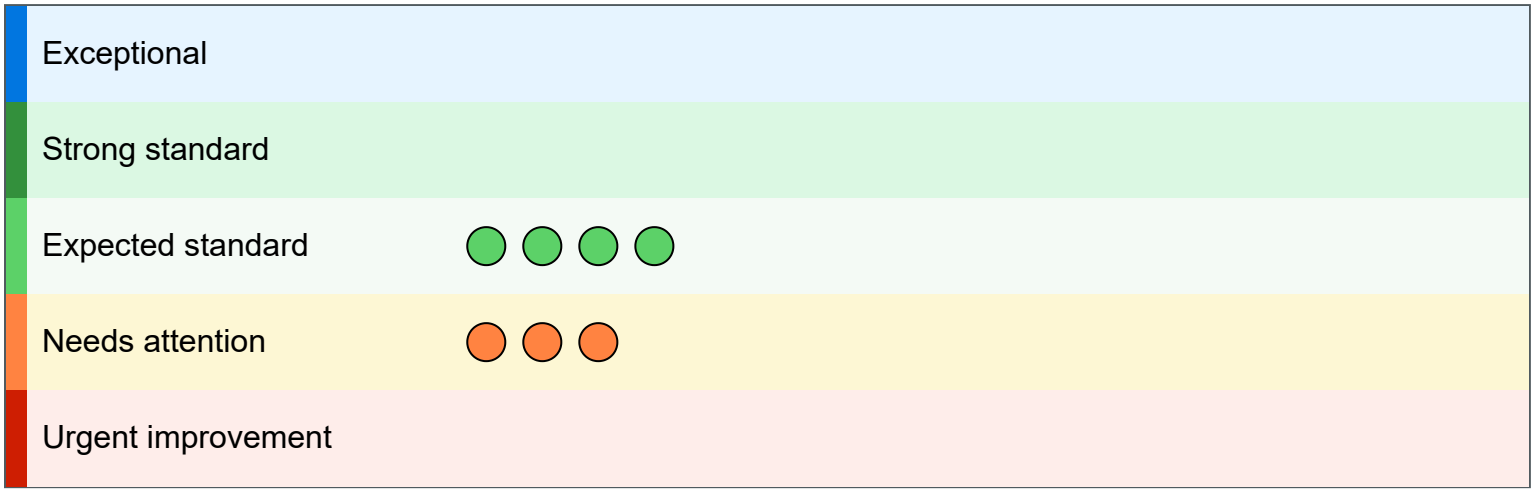
Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery

Address: Shorrock Lane, BLACKBURN, Lancashire, BB2 4TT

Unique reference number (URN): 119122

Inspection report: 22 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

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that the school’s curriculum is broad and meets the needs of all pupils from the early years to the end of Year 2. Staff and leaders make conscious decisions about how to adapt the curriculum effectively to reduce any barriers that pupils face in their learning. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have identified clearly the order in which pupils should learn key knowledge and skills, including in mixed-age classes, so that this builds in logical steps over time.

Leaders place high importance on the fundamental knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in communication, mathematics and early reading. They ensure that staff have the expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff teach phonics consistently well across the school. They spot if a pupil is struggling to keep up with the phonics programme and provide extra support that helps them to catch up quickly. Staff ensure that their teaching includes a clear focus on promoting pupils' language and communication skills. Since the last inspection, leaders have made changes to the curriculum, including in writing, to improve pupils’ learning and application of knowledge. Leaders have also recently adopted a new approach to teaching handwriting. They have ensured that staff have the support and training they need to deliver this consistently.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that children get off to a positive start to their education from the moment they join the Nursery or Reception classes. The early years curriculum is broad and progressive. It sets out what children should learn over time. Staff deliver the curriculum well. They use their interactions to develop children's learning and to enhance their communication skills. Children have many opportunities to practise and apply their new learning in other contexts and activities.

Children benefit from the school's robust transition procedures. When they join the school, staff quickly identify any barriers to children's learning and wellbeing. Staff meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Children in the early years make positive progress from their starting points in all areas of their learning. The outdoor provision supports children’s physical development, develops their problem-solving skills and promotes their curiosity. Typically, children develop the language skills, mathematics knowledge and independence they need to be prepared well for Year 1.

Staff help children to understand and to follow the school's routines. Children enjoy playing together and develop warm, trusting relationships with the staff. They demonstrate that they feel happy and safe at school.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that an inclusive culture permeates all aspects of the life of the school. They carefully consider what barriers pupils face, both in their learning and in relation to their

personal and emotional development. Staff provide a wealth of support to pupils and their families, which is effective in helping to reduce these barriers.

Leaders are proactive at ensuring that staff access training and advice from specialists. This helps staff to build their understanding about pupils' needs and to develop their expertise in inclusive practice. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. They make adaptations to their teaching and the curriculum to provide bespoke support to pupils. As a result, all pupils access an equally ambitious, engaging and broad curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face a range of personal challenges in their lives.

All pupils have access to the broader experiences on offer at this school. Leaders use additional funding in the best interests of pupils. They consider what will make the biggest difference to pupils, allowing them to thrive in school and beyond. Leaders check that the support given to pupils makes a positive difference.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that the school's extra-curricular offer broadens pupils' experiences. Pupils participate in a programme of activities that supports and develops their wider skills and interests. This inspires pupils and encourages them to try new things and to discover their talents. For example, pupils have opportunities to attend clubs such as tennis, football and dodgeball. Pupils develop leadership skills through becoming members of the school council and in their roles as lunchtime helpers. They contribute positively to their local community. For example, pupils create Christmas decorations for local businesses. Through these roles and responsibilities, pupils develop their confidence. They build their understanding of how they can make a positive impact on the school and on society more broadly.

Leaders have developed a relevant and engaging personal development programme. Staff make appropriate adaptations so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can access it fully. Leaders consider the school's context and the needs of the pupils. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when they use online devices. They develop their understanding of how to eat healthily and the importance of physical exercise. At playtimes, staff encourage pupils to be active through running games and dance.

Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values. They know how these link to their own school values. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. For example, the school's curriculum is enriched with visits and visitors to the school that promote pupils' knowledge and appreciation of diversity. Staff help pupils to understand the impact of their actions on others, and to know what makes a positive friendship. Leaders and staff provide well-considered personal support to pupils and to their families. They ensure that all pupils, including those who face particular challenges to their learning or wellbeing, can participate fully in school life.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Many pupils achieve well across the curriculum. However, in some subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills do not develop as securely and deeply as they should. This includes pupils' writing. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for key stage 2 as they need to be. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address this through revised teaching approaches. However, these improvements are recent and need time to have the impact that leaders intend.

Pupils make positive progress with their communication skills from their starting points. This includes pupils who face barriers to their spoken language development. In mathematics, pupils typically gain the knowledge that they need by the end of Year 2. In phonics, pupils make significant progress from their starting points and quickly gain confidence and fluency in reading. Pupils' gaps in their phonics knowledge reduce consistently over time. This includes pupils who face significant barriers to their learning. This is not always reflected in published phonics outcomes.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Over time, leaders have improved the attendance of some pupils who were identified as being persistently absent. However, overall attendance levels have remained below national comparators for several consecutive years. Targeted support helps some pupils to overcome their barriers to high school attendance. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly. Leaders have recently developed a robust approach to monitoring attendance. This new approach enables leaders to take quicker, more effective action to reduce pupil absences. These strategies are at an early stage of development and implementation, and therefore the positive impact is not fully realised.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff model these expectations consistently. Pupils are polite and behave well. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They show determination as they keep on trying when they find learning difficult. Children in the early years quickly learn the routines and confidently follow them. Staff provide appropriate, bespoke support to pupils who find it particularly challenging to manage their behaviour. While incidents of bullying are rare at this school, leaders take any concerns about alleged bullying or discrimination seriously. They take appropriate action to address any concerns.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. Their actions focus on improving the quality of the school over time. In some areas, this work is in its infancy and improvements have not been prioritised with enough urgency. Leaders have strengthened their oversight and understanding about the impact of their work. Leaders and staff are united in their vision for all pupils to flourish. They engage positively with parents and carers. Leaders and staff consistently place pupils' best interests at the heart of their decision-making.

Governors understand their responsibilities and are supportive of staff and leaders. They gather information about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. This gives governors a broad overview of the school's effectiveness and about leaders' actions. However, governors are not rigorous enough when exploring the impact of these actions. At times, this hinders their ability to support and challenge school leaders.

Leaders ensure that staff's wellbeing and workload are considered. They provide support and professional development to ensure that staff fulfil their roles well. Leaders proactively seek opportunities to work in partnership with other schools and professionals. They use these opportunities to reflect on and develop staff's knowledge and expertise.

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

This caring school places pupils' wellbeing and personal development at its heart. From the moment children begin school in early years, they settle quickly and establish warm bonds with the staff. Pupils understand what the school values mean and try hard to live up to the school motto, to be 'one school, one family – learning, caring and growing together'. Pupils appreciate the many ways in which they can communicate with staff. They feel confident that staff look out for them and would help them with any worries. Pupils behave respectfully in lessons and at playtimes. This contributes to a calm and positive learning environment. Leaders have clear processes to address any rare incidents of bullying.

Pupils value the wide range of experiences that they encounter at school. For example, pupils participate in canoeing and a range of sports. They have opportunities to join a choir and go on many trips, including to the Lake District. Pupils learn about the natural world through their outdoor learning activities. These experiences allow pupils to develop their interests, confidence, resilience and aspirations. Staff ensure that all pupils have access to these opportunities and are fully included in school life. However, some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Pupils experience a broad and interesting curriculum and enjoy their learning. Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. However, some pupils do not learn as well in other areas of the curriculum, including writing. This means that in these subject areas, pupils are not as well prepared for their entry into key stage 2. Staff know pupils well and provide support to meet their learning needs. This allows pupils who have barriers to their learning to make progress from their starting points.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue with their work to improve pupils' attendance so that pupils' absence rates reduce.
- Leaders should ensure that teaching across the curriculum strengthens pupils' depth of understanding, particularly in writing, so that they are prepared for key stage 2.

- Leaders, including governors, should ensure that they review the impact of their strategic work.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Natalie Young.

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

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 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 met with governors, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher and staff during the inspection. They also spoke to pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: James Waddington

Lead inspector:
Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Wendy Tracey, Ofsted Inspector
Jem Nicholson, 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

169

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: 268

School capacity

180
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)

41.86%
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

9.47%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.85%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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).

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)	6.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.3%	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 (3 term)	24.5%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.2%	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.

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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