

Almondbury Community School

Fernside Avenue, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PQ

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Inadequate |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Inadequate |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Inadequate |
| Early years provision | Inadequate |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Staff record concerns about pupils' welfare, but leaders are not sufficiently vigilant in identifying when pupils may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is ineffective.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to bring about the improvements needed with enough urgency. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is variable and too many pupils are underachieving.
- Senior leaders lack oversight of whole-school issues such as exclusions, racist incidents, bullying and behaviour. This limits their ability to identify and tackle patterns of concern.
- There is low-level disruption when teachers do not plan learning which matches pupils' needs.
- Governors have not challenged leaders sufficiently to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Governors have not checked well enough on the quality of the school's work around safeguarding.
- In the past three years, pupils have not made sufficient progress by the end of each key stage. Weak teaching hampers current pupils' progress, particularly for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The curriculum at key stage 1 is limited. Pupils do not learn enough about science and other subjects such as history and geography. As a result, they do not accumulate the knowledge needed for their next steps at school.

The school has the following strengths

- Typically, most pupils get on well together and are respectful of each other.
- Effective careers education and guidance ensure that pupils secure appropriate further education opportunities, including apprenticeships at the end of Year 11.
- In the early years, staff help to develop children's language and communication skills well. Staff promote children's love of learning successfully.
- The nurture provision supports pupils who need extra help with their learning and their social skills very well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that leaders are vigilant in identifying pupils at risk of abuse or neglect
 - making sure that monitoring and quality assurance activities focus on improving pupils' progress
 - providing middle leaders with the necessary time and resources to monitor pupils' progress and improve the quality of teaching
 - holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes
 - developing the curriculum at key stage 1 so that pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects
 - checking that training provided to staff has the desired impact on pupils' learning
 - developing systems to analyse and evaluate data collected in the school about behaviour, racist incidents, exclusions and bullying so that patterns of concern can be identified and addressed
 - ensuring that governors undertake appropriate checks to verify that safeguarding arrangements are effective
 - ensuring that governors use pupil progress information to hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' outcomes improve across the school, particularly for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, by:
 - eradicating weak teaching urgently, particularly in mathematics at key stage 3 and key stage 4
 - providing teachers with opportunities to observe good practice
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - reducing the variability in the quality of teaching across key stage 2
 - planning learning activities which interest and engage pupils so that low-level disruption is reduced.
- Improve the teaching of reading and writing in the early years and key stage 1 so that children get off to a strong start and make better progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, particularly those with lower starting points, experience systematic, synthetic phonics teaching that is carefully planned to meet their needs and abilities

- making sure that reading books are well matched to the sounds pupils have been taught and that they have the opportunity to practise and enjoy reading these books at home and at school
 - teaching children to apply the sounds they have learned to their spelling so that they can write with greater independence across the curriculum.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils by:
- reducing the incidence of poor behaviour exhibited by a small minority of pupils
 - reducing low-level disruption
 - continuing to improve the attendance of pupils
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching in personal skills and reflections is consistently high.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the last section 5 inspection, leaders have not taken sufficiently rigorous action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Governors have not held leaders to account well enough to address weak teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching is too variable, and pupils' outcomes have been poor over time. Outcomes at key stage 4 are inadequate, particularly in mathematics and especially for boys.
- Senior leaders do not analyse and evaluate key aspects of the school's performance, including behaviour, bullying, racist incidents and exclusions. They are therefore unable to identify patterns and unable to act to address issues which recur.
- Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and pupils' welfare have not been sufficiently vigilant in using recorded concerns to identify pupils who are at risk of abuse or neglect. Consequently, pupils have not been referred to the appropriate authority to receive the support they need.
- Leaders engage appropriately with the local authority 'Prevent' officer and the police to make referrals when they have concerns about possible radicalisation and extremism. A group of pupils received specialist input from Channel in 2017. However, leaders have not taken up all the opportunities offered by the local authority to support the school's work on 'Prevent'.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and keen to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects. However, they have limited time and resources to do so. A clearly defined quality assurance cycle sometimes fails to bring about improvement because middle leaders are not provided with sufficient time to visit lessons in their subject area or to support those teachers who need to develop their practice. This is particularly a concern for secondary subject leaders. As a result, weak teaching persists in key areas of the curriculum such as mathematics.
- Leaders' checks, including visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, are too focused on compliance with policies rather than on improving pupils' progress. Neither middle leaders nor teachers are held to account effectively for pupils' progress in their subjects and classes. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are frequently too low and poor progress goes unchallenged.
- The school's improvement plan does not take full account of the outcomes in each key stage at the end of 2018. It does not address all priorities, such as the attainment and progress of boys, which were exceptionally weak in 2018.
- Regular training is provided for staff. Although leaders make positive assertions about the training, they cannot confidently identify the impact of professional development on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of the school's work are ineffective.
- The provision for pupils with SEND has recently improved. Staff have a better understanding of different pupils' needs. External agencies, such as the educational psychologist, support the school's work with pupils with SEND. The impact of improvements in the provision have been recognised by a national award. However, the progress of pupils with SEND still lags behind that of other pupils with similar

starting points.

- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 4 in 2018 were well below the provisional national averages for other pupils. Leaders and governors have been slow to analyse the impact of the ways in which pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding were spent to improve pupils' outcomes in 2018. Pupil premium funding is not used effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils from across the school.
- At key stage 1, the curriculum is focused intensively on English and mathematics, with insufficient time given to developing pupils' skills and building knowledge in other subjects. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in subjects such as science and history.
- Nearly all key stage 4 pupils have studied the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) curriculum over recent years. This is the case in Year 11, reflecting leaders' aspirations for pupils to achieve university places. However, leaders have recognised that the EBacc pathway does not meet all pupils' needs and, for some pupils, does not lead to the best possible outcomes. A wider curriculum with more options is now in place for Year 10.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. For example, pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) club, as well as various sporting and artistic activities. Physical education and sport premium funding contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of sport through additional coaching. For example, primary-aged pupils take part in fencing.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision. Pupils at alternative provision receive a wide-ranging, engaging curriculum. The school is in regular contact with the providers to check on pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress.
- Typically, pupils have a good understanding of the values which characterise a successful citizen. They are particularly well-versed in the processes of democracy, having taken part in mock 'Brexit' elections, as well as voting for their school council representatives. House councillors have good opportunities to represent the views of their peers, including at governing body meetings.
- Staff who spoke with inspectors during the inspection said that they enjoy working at the school. They recognise and value the headteacher's contribution in creating what they describe as the 'family atmosphere' in the school.
- The local authority has challenged the school's leaders following the most recent examination results in 2018. Officers recognise the need for pupils' outcomes to improve. The local authority has arranged for a review of safeguarding. This started during the week of the inspection. Senior leaders from a school with the same age range of pupils have very recently visited Almondbury to start providing additional support. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not challenged school leaders to bring about the necessary improvements to the quality of teaching or pupils' outcomes, as identified in the last inspection. Too much weak teaching remains. Overall outcomes are inadequate.
- Governors have made sure that their own and staff safeguarding training is up to date. The chair of the governing body has taken steps to ensure that staff are safely recruited. However, governors have not checked that the school's systems and practices to safeguard pupils are effective.
- Governors can describe the outcomes achieved by pupils in 2018. Governors are able to identify where there have been improvements and where there are weaknesses. While the standards committee discusses pupils' outcomes, the full governing body does not regularly consider how well pupils are achieving and use this to challenge leaders about the school's performance. Evaluations of the spending of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding have not been completed. Therefore, the school's website does not meet requirements.
- The governing body knows the school and its community well. Governors recognise the barriers to learning faced by many pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils are safe from abuse and neglect because they have not been vigilant in responding to concerns recorded by staff.
- The checks made on staff when they are recruited meet requirements. Records show that staff have received the required training in relation to safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty. Staff can explain the signs of abuse and neglect. However, this training has not prevented concerns about pupils' safety at home being missed.
- When pupils at risk of harm have been referred to the appropriate authority, records of meetings and actions taken are detailed. The school involves a range of other agencies to support pupils, including the school nurse, the police and the neighbourhood housing team.
- The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe at school. They are confident that staff will help them if they have concerns. Similarly, a large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their children are happy and safe.
- Pupils say that behaviour sometimes deteriorates when they are not as closely supervised, for example in certain areas of the extensive school grounds.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- As a result of inadequate teaching, learning and assessment over time, the outcomes achieved by pupils are poor.
- Leaders have not secured the much-needed improvements to the quality of teaching and learning which were identified at the last two section 5 inspections. The quality of

teaching is too variable across the school. Teaching is not strong enough to bring about the progress required for pupils to catch up with their learning. Middle leaders do not have confidence that the quality of teaching is improving in key stages 3 and 4.

- Expectations of what pupils can do are often too low. Too often, teachers do not plan learning which interests and challenges pupils. In many subject areas there is low-level disruption at key stages 3 and 4 because pupils lose interest in their learning. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies considerably across key stages 1 and 2. Those pupils who start key stage 1 with skills that are below those typical for their age are not given precise enough direction and support to help them to catch up with their peers. The most able pupils do not consistently have work that challenges their thinking to help them to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' progress stalls as they enter key stage 2 because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is weak in Years 3 and 4. In upper key stage 2, adults have higher expectations of pupils and teaching is better matched to individuals' needs. However, due to the weak quality of education in lower key stage 2, pupils simply have too much ground to make up.
- Phonics teaching in key stage 1 is not effective in preparing pupils to read and write well. Teachers do not provide clear direction or effective strategies to help pupils to learn to read and write. As a result, a considerable proportion of pupils, particularly boys and lower-ability pupils, struggle to make the necessary progress. The most able pupils make good progress in reading and writing because the adults have a good understanding of what the pupils need to learn next and move them on quickly.
- The catch-up teaching for pupils in key stage 2 who have not achieved the phonics standard by the end of key stage 1 is effective in helping pupils to make good gains in their learning. These pupils have teaching and reading materials that are carefully and appropriately matched to their ability and stage of learning. As a result, pupils are confident to read to an adult and read with fluency and accuracy.
- Teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics are limited in key stage 1. The curriculum does not take sufficient account of subjects such as science, history and geography. Pupils have more access to a wider curriculum in key stage 2, where leaders' ambition for a breadth of experiences in class and through extra-curricular activities starts to shine through, particularly in upper key stage 2.
- In key stages 1 and 2, newly introduced strategies are helping some pupils to gain more confidence in their number skills. However, the school's own assessment information and pupils' work show that progress is slow for pupils with lower starting points. Their work is often not completed. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics knowledge by solving problems increase as pupils move through key stage 2. Despite this, pupils are rarely challenged to explain their mathematical reasoning. This limits the progress pupils make in mathematics.
- There are some better teaching, learning and assessment at key stages 3 and 4 but these are not consistent within subjects. For example, the most able pupils' work in English in Year 11 demonstrates improved learning and progress. Similarly, observations of the most able pupils in Year 11 languages showed that pupils were engaged in their learning and enjoyed discussing the French language with their

teacher. Strong teaching in art leads to good progress. Better-quality teaching and learning are typified by adults' high expectations and work set for pupils that is appropriately challenging. Effective questioning draws out pupils' understanding, and good relationships develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Personal, social, cultural and health education are delivered through personal skills and reflection time. Although the content of the lessons is appropriately focused to support pupils' development, the quality of the learning is dependent on the quality of teaching. For example, in one lesson, pupils were thoughtfully discussing the impact of social media. In another, pupils were copying work from the board about social media which they had already encountered the week before.
- The vast majority of pupils say they feel happy and safe at school. They recognise that there is a small amount of bullying, but all say they have an adult who they can approach for support. A very small minority of older pupils felt that although bullying was dealt with, adults did not always respond quickly enough. Younger pupils are not always clear exactly what bullying is.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and understand the risks associated with the internet and social media.
- Typically, pupils have good relationships with each other and work well together in lessons. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, primary-aged pupils play well together in mixed gender and ethnicity groups. There is a similarly cohesive picture in the school dining room for key stage 3 and 4 pupils.
- Pupils who attend the nurture provision are very well cared for. They enjoy the sensitive, caring and welcoming ethos that the team provides.
- The school provides a base for pupils who are new to speaking English, some of whom have recently arrived in the country. Pupils in this base told inspectors that they like coming to school and feel happy and safe. They have made friends since arriving at the school. Induction for pupils new to the country is carefully planned.
- Careers education and guidance are effective in ensuring that all pupils leaving at the end of Year 11 go on to further education, training and employment. The proportion of pupils who go on to apprenticeships is higher than average. Year 11 pupils were preparing personal statements for future university applications during the inspection, demonstrating the aspiration that pupils should aim for higher education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The behaviour of most pupils is positive. Pupils, for the most part, are polite and respectful of each other and of staff. Staff say the new behaviour policy has had a

positive impact. However, a very small group of pupils behave less well, particularly in Year 9, and do not follow the expectations of the school.

- Pastoral middle leaders analyse behaviour incidents but there is insufficient overarching monitoring and evaluation of behaviour patterns by senior leaders. This restricts leaders' ability to identify actions which could improve pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive when activities are well planned to meet their needs. Where pupils are not engaged by the teaching, there is low-level disruption. This has a negative effect on pupils' progress.
- As a result of leaders' actions, attendance has improved this term compared to the same time last year. However, for the past two years, absence and persistent absence have been above the national averages.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has been above the national average for the past two years. The rate of fixed-term exclusions has reduced this term.
- The behaviour and attendance of the very small number of pupils at alternative provision are carefully monitored.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Overall progress for pupils at the end of Year 11 was below the national average for the past three years. In 2018, pupils' progress was well below the provisional national average. The progress made by boys and disadvantaged pupils was particularly weak, as was progress in mathematics. Actions to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection have not had sufficient impact.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 4 in 2018 was well below the provisional national average for all EBacc subjects and particularly low in mathematics. Boys' attainment was exceptionally low in mathematics and science.
- Provisional results show that girls' progress in English at the end of key stage 4 in 2018 was broadly in line with the national average. Although some variability remains, there is evidence that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is leading to better progress in English for current pupils.
- For secondary-aged pupils, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for current pupils has not improved sufficiently to bring about the significant improvements to progress needed in mathematics. Improving the progress for boys is not a focus of the improvement plan. Middle leaders are unable to point to any specific actions aimed at improving boys' outcomes.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, although there were signs of improvement compared to the outcomes achieved by pupils in 2017, less than half of the Year 6 pupils reached the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was below average and in writing was well below the national average. No pupils with SEND reached the expected standard in reading and writing in the past two years. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is particularly weak compared to that of others nationally.
- In key stage 1, by the end of Year 2, outcomes were better in 2018 than in the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics. However, attainment remained

below the provisional national average in all areas. Attainment is weakest in writing, with just over half of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of key stage 1. No pupils with SEND met the standard in reading, writing or mathematics. No pupils attained at greater depth in writing or mathematics.

- The proportion of girls meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was broadly in line with the national average in 2018. However, the proportion of boys meeting the expected standard was well below the national average. The teaching of phonics for pupils currently in key stage 1 does not enable pupils to develop their phonological knowledge to enable them to read well. However, pupils in key stage 2 who did not meet the expected standard in phonics are now making good progress because of effective teaching in extra sessions.
- Pupils' workbooks and the school's own assessment information show that, for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils' achievement over time is weak. Pupils' current progress is not strong enough for pupils to catch up. At key stage 1, pupils' progress is hampered because the curriculum does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to study science and the full range of other subjects beyond English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate because the weaknesses in safeguarding practice in the school overall apply equally to the youngest children.
- Leaders have not maintained the good quality of education in the early years since the last inspection. Although children get a caring and friendly start to school life, they do not make strong progress through Nursery and Reception. Boys and children with skills below those typical for their age make slow progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has fallen since the last inspection. In 2018, approximately half of the children leaving Reception were not well prepared for Year 1.
- The teaching of phonics starts early in Nursery and Reception, but it is not used effectively to promote and support children's learning in reading and writing. Children are not able to use their phonological knowledge to sound out new words when writing. They learn to write by writing over letters and copying words and sentences. They do not practise using the new sounds they have learned in phonics when writing and find it difficult to write independently. Similarly, children do not have the opportunity to read books which feature the sounds they have learned or are learning to help them to develop fluency, accuracy and confidence in early reading. Only a very small number of children in Reception have a reading book.
- The early years team plan activities in the classroom and outdoor areas to promote all areas of the curriculum. However, observations of learning during the inspection, and records of children's learning over time, show that most children, particularly boys, do not choose to access reading and writing activities independently. In addition, some of the planned activities and resources provided in different areas of learning do not enable the most able children to extend and deepen their learning.
- Boys generally cooperate well with each other and sustain concentration for long periods on one activity, for example in the construction area or in the small world vehicle tray. However, staff are not successfully planning opportunities for boys to

develop their basic skills in literacy and mathematics. The early years teachers have recognised the substantial difference between boys' and girls' knowledge and skills and have recently visited another school to look at ways to improve their provision.

- Adults quickly get to know the children, through home visits, positive engagement with parents and by taking time to understand each child's interests and abilities. The relationships between children and the adults in the early years are a strength. Adults promote good behaviour well. They use calm and effective strategies to address any challenging behaviour, and children rise to adults' high expectations by demonstrating good manners and kindness towards each other.
- Where staff engage directly with children, they pay close attention to developing children's language and communication skills, as well as promoting an enjoyment of learning. During the inspection, children eagerly gathered around an adult who was effectively modelling how the music area could be used to sing and accompany festive songs. Children watched, listened and started to join in enthusiastically, copying the new song and actions they had seen. They sustained interest and engagement in the activity when the adult moved to support another activity.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 107758 |
| Local authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 10086136 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 694 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Gill Goodswen |
| Headteacher | Trevor Bowen |
| Telephone number | 01484 426666 |
| Website | www.almondburycs.org.uk/ |
| Email address | office.almondburycs@kirkleeseducation.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 14–15 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- In the secondary phase, the school is smaller than the average-sized school. In the primary phase, it is larger than typical primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. An above average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above the national average. A similar proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan to that seen nationally.
- The school largely uses two alternative providers for a very small number of pupils: Brian Jackson College and Ethos College, in Kirklees.
- During the inspection, inspectors were aware that a serious incident that occurred at the setting since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate

authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Information about this inspection

- This unannounced inspection was initially conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with Ofsted’s published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. This section 8 inspection was subsequently deemed to be a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- Inspectors undertook lesson observations in a range of subjects and across the school, including in the early years. Pupils’ work was evaluated, both during lesson observations and during separate work scrutiny. An inspector also visited pupils at the two alternative providers.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They also held meetings with the chair of the governing body, two other governors and four officers from the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with the local authority ‘Prevent’ coordinator.
- Pupils were spoken to formally in meetings and informally at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also talked to pupils in the nurture room and in the base for pupils who are new to the country.
- Inspectors considered the 63 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Documentation provided by the school was evaluated, including the improvement plan, safeguarding documents, progress information and information about behaviour, attendance and exclusions. Minutes of the governing body were reviewed.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Helen Lane, lead inspector | Senior Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| John Young | Senior Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Kate Rowley | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Geraint Evans | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Steve Shaw | Her Majesty’s Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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