

# East Ward Community Primary School

**Address:** Willow Street, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 7QZ

**Unique reference number (URN):** 144572

## Inspection report: 20 January 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 ●

### Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders are well informed. They ensure staff and pupils have a strong voice in curriculum improvement. Leaders' current focus on improving how well teachers check understanding and shape teaching is well grounded.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that is tailored to the school's context. For example, in design and technology, pupils learn to prepare affordable and healthy meals. Staff share recipes so families can recreate these meals at home.

The curriculum is carefully ordered so pupils build knowledge securely over time. Leaders make sure teachers have strong subject knowledge. This is clear in the direct explanations and routine opportunities to revisit prior learning that teachers provide.

Teachers know their pupils well. They are successful in reducing barriers to learning that pupils may face. This allows pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to progress well through the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that building blocks for future learning in English and mathematics are taught systematically and well. They are determined that every pupil learns to read. Any pupil who needs help to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme is given targeted support. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to become confident communicators. Classrooms are awash with purposeful talk.

### Early years

Strong standard ●

Staff across early years engage children in high-quality interactions that support their learning strongly. Classrooms are filled with meaningful talk. Staff introduce and reinforce vocabulary through stories, songs, rhymes, routines and play. For example, staff model words such as empty, half full and full while children explore with diggers and pasta. In role-play and construction areas, staff introduce topic-related language and encourage children to explain their thinking. These back and forth conversations help children grow confident in speaking and listening.

The curriculum is extremely well designed. It focuses clearly on what children need to learn and the order they need to learn it in. Staff make sure new learning builds securely on what children already know and can do.

Leaders prioritise reading from the start. Reception-age children learn phonics quickly and use this knowledge to begin to read and write. Staff share books often and nurture children's love of reading.

Children in the nursery settle happily and feel secure. Reception-age children are confident and increasingly independent. They are ready for the move to Year 1. Throughout early years, warm relationships help children thrive. Leaders also build strong and lasting partnerships with parents and carers that support children's learning and wellbeing well.

## **Inclusion**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders are determined that all pupils can be 'happy, challenged, successful and proud'. The support that is offered to pupils spreads beyond the school gates to their parents and carers. The Little Oaks Nursery brings the community together and ensures easier access to the services that pupils and their families need.

Serving pupils' best interests is at the centre of the school's work. Pupils benefit from very effective provision that promotes their emotional wellbeing. Established routines, such as mindful breakfasts, help pupils feel calm, secure and ready to learn.

Barriers to learning are identified carefully and skilfully removed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language are supported remarkably well. Staff use their skilled expertise to make suitable changes to lessons to enable these pupils to learn successfully. This includes pupils who need the more specialised approach to learning provided in the Honey Pot, the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders regularly check that support is appropriate and responsive to pupils' needs.

Leaders use pupil premium funding to support pupils effectively. This includes making sure that pupils can access all that the school has to offer, including extra-curricular opportunities.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders place pupils' best interests at the centre of everything they do. The school's pastoral support is a real strength. Staff know pupils extremely well. Pupils receive caring and carefully tailored support. For example, pupils who attend the mindful breakfast sessions begin their day in a calm, positive way.

Leaders have created a wide ranging personal development programme. They have chosen curriculum materials carefully to make sure they are suitable for different ages. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including how to manage risks online. They gain a strong understanding of what it means to be healthy in both mind and body. Pupils relish learning in the outdoors and growing and selling their own produce.

Pupils learn what important British values look like in their day-to-day lives. They treat each other with high levels of respect. Pupils enjoy learning about different beliefs, values and viewpoints within the school's diverse community. They become confident speakers. They listen attentively and build on each other's ideas thoughtfully.

Pupils enjoy taking active roles within the school and local community, for example through litter picking and recycling projects. These experiences help pupils to build confidence and a keen sense of responsibility. Pupils spoke positively about the many clubs on offer to them. These allow them to explore interests in areas such as computing, football and mindfulness.

Leaders want pupils to aim high for their futures. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work to help build aspirations. Pupils also take part in a wide range of cultural activities including music lessons, performing arts and themed days that celebrate different cultures and faiths. Visits and visitors help deepen their understanding of their local

area and the wider world. Leaders remove any barriers, including financial ones, to ensure all pupils can access these opportunities.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. They read and use number accurately and fluently. Leaders' focus on improving pupils' writing is bearing fruit. Pupils now write with increasing legibility and a sense of purpose. In the main, pupils recall their prior learning well, including in the wider curriculum.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in national assessments is broadly in line with those of other pupils. Over time, disadvantaged pupils have performed significantly above their national peers in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the most recent published data shows that these pupils attained closer to national averages.

Leaders check closely how well pupils are achieving. They ensure that well-tailored support is in place for pupils who need it. This means that pupils with gaps in their knowledge, particularly in phonics and multiplication, are helped to keep up with their peers where needed.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have put clear systems in place to improve attendance. They are diligent in following up absence. Leaders interrogate data closely to ensure that they can spot dips in attendance quickly. Their strong relationships with parents and carers help leaders to have honest and supportive conversations.

Leaders' actions have had a positive impact on improving some pupils' attendance, including those with significant barriers. Pupils' persistent absence, although remaining below national averages, is improving year on year. While leaders understand the causes of absence and tailor support well, their actions have not secured rapid improvement over time.

The school is an orderly and respectful environment. Pupils feel safe. They know that bullying of any kind is not tolerated and that any concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Staff apply behaviour policies consistently. They address very occasional low-level disruption quickly. Pupils know that they are expected to be ready, respectful and safe. They rise to these expectations and behave well in lessons and at social times. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and to each other.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs met expertly. Staff know pupils extremely well. They provide strong care and support to any pupils who find managing their emotions difficult.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels are staunchly committed to the pupils, their families and the wider community. They provide principled and courageous leadership. Leaders understand the school's strengths and priorities well. They use a suitable range of information, including gathering the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff, to check what is going well. When improvement is needed, leaders think carefully about the actions most likely to secure better outcomes, such as strengthening pupils' writing and oracy. Leaders review progress regularly and adapt their plans in response. This ensures that improvement work stays focused and broadly effective.

Trustees and local governors carry out their roles and responsibilities with diligence. They manage resources carefully and provide well-balanced support and challenge to school leaders. Trustees consider workload implications carefully when approving new initiatives. This is important during the trust's current period of interim leadership.

Leaders maintain positive and constructive relationships with parents, for example through adult learning opportunities. They make decisions that place pupils' needs at the centre. This is especially clear for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care. Funding and provision for these pupils are prioritised. Leaders check regularly that support is improving pupils' attendance, wellbeing and academic progress.

Staff benefit from a well-structured professional development programme that includes coaching and opportunities to strengthen subject knowledge. This includes carefully designed induction for teachers at the early stage of their career. Staff morale is high. They report that they are valued and well supported.

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

This school truly sits at the heart of its community. Pupils flourish in its warm and welcoming environment. Staff greet them by name each morning and make sure they feel noticed and welcomed.

Children in early years settle quickly. Staff introduce them to lots of new words. Nursery-age children delight in using words such as sprinkle, full and scoop to describe ladling glittery snow. Children are well prepared for their next steps in learning.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They show positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms buzz with purposeful learning. Pupils trust adults to support them if they are worried about anything, including rare incidents of bullying. Pupils feel safe in school.

Staff have a deep understanding of the various barriers to learning and wellbeing that pupils may face. Leaders begin reducing these barriers right from the start. They work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to get the right help and support that pupils need to thrive and succeed.

Leaders communicate well with parents to explain why it is important for their children to attend school regularly. This work has had a positive impact on reducing some pupils' absences. Staff successfully support those pupils who still do not attend school as often as they should.

The curriculum is ambitious and relevant. It is taught consistently well so that pupils' knowledge deepens over time. Outcomes in national assessments highlight how, by the end of key stage 2, most pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils blossom in terms of their wider development. A wide range of clubs and educational visits broaden their experiences and harness their interests and talents. Pupils are proud that their voices are heard. They give their time eagerly to support their school, including by acting as eco councillors, values ambassadors or librarians.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to implement and evaluate their attendance strategy to secure consistently high attendance for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

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## About this inspection

This school is part of Vision Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is currently run by interim chief executive officers, Kathryn Mort and Christopher Bell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Goldberg. Kathryn Mort is also the executive headteacher of this and another school in the trust.

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 executive headteacher, head of school and other school leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and of the local board of governors, including the chairs of both boards. Meetings also took place with representatives of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes specially resourced provision for 22 pupils with autism (ASD).

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery for 3- and 4-year-old children. The nursery, Little Oaks, operates from the following address: Hazel Avenue, Bury, BL9 7QT.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Head of school : Laura Jarvis

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### **Lead inspector:**

Jackie Stillings, His Majesty's Inspector

### **Team inspectors:**


Sarah Price, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Howard, Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Crompton, 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 20 January 2026

## **School and pupil context**

### **Total pupils**

**476**

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

### **School capacity**

**420**

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

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**55.28%**

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%

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

**9.45%**

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**

**10.50%**

Below average

#### **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 15%

### **Location deprivation**

**Well above average**

#### **What does this mean?**

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

### **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

## **Resourced provision and SEN unit**

### **What does this mean?**

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

### **Type of specialist provision (if applicable)**

## **ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

### **What does this mean?**

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

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 63%                | 61%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 62%                | 62%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 65%                | 61%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 61%                | 60%                     | Close to average                      |

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 73%                | 74%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 69%                | 75%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 74%                | 74%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 76%                | 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.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 70%                | 72%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 71%                | 72%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 75%                | 72%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 65%                | 71%                     | Below                                 |

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 76%                | 73%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 76%                | 74%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 74%                | 73%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 79%                | 73%                     | Close to average                      |

### **Disadvantaged pupils' performance**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 62%                | 46%                     | Above                                 |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 59%                | 47%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 56%                | 46%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 70%                | 44%                     | Above                                 |

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 71%                | 62%                     | Above                                 |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 65%                | 63%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 71%                | 62%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 79%                | 60%                     | Above                                 |

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 69%                | 59%                     | Above                                 |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 68%                | 59%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 68%                | 58%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 73%                | 58%                     | Above                                 |

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 74%                | 60%                     | Above                                 |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 73%                | 61%                     | Above                                 |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 65%                | 59%                     | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 85%                | 59%                     | Above                                 |

### **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.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National non-disadvantaged score</b> | <b>School disadvantage gap</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 62%                | 68%                                     | -6 pp                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 59%                | 69%                                     | -10 pp                         |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 56%                | 67%                                     | -12 pp                         |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 70%                | 66%                                     | 3 pp                           |

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National non-disadvantaged score</b> | <b>School disadvantage gap</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 71%                | 80%                                     | -8 pp                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 65%                | 81%                                     | -16 pp                         |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 71%                | 80%                                     | -9 pp                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 79%                | 78%                                     | 0 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.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National non-disadvantaged score</b> | <b>School disadvantage gap</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 69%                | 78%                                     | -9 pp                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 68%                | 78%                                     | -11 pp                         |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 68%                | 78%                                     | -10 pp                         |

| <b>Year</b>            | <b>This school</b> | <b>National non-disadvantaged score</b> | <b>School disadvantage gap</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b> | 73%                | 77%                                     | -5 pp                          |

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

| <b>Year</b>                  | <b>This school</b> | <b>National non-disadvantaged score</b> | <b>School disadvantage gap</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 74%                | 80%                                     | -6 pp                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 73%                | 81%                                     | -8 pp                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 65%                | 79%                                     | -15 pp                         |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 85%                | 79%                                     | 6 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.

| <b>Year</b>             | <b>This school</b> | <b>National average</b> | <b>Compared with national average</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>2024/25 (2 term)</b> | 5.8%               | 5.2%                    | Close to average                      |
| <b>2023/24 (3 term)</b> | 6.1%               | 5.5%                    | Close to average                      |
| <b>2022/23 (3 term)</b> | 7.2%               | 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) | 17.5%       | 13.3%            | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 18.1%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 21.4%       | 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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