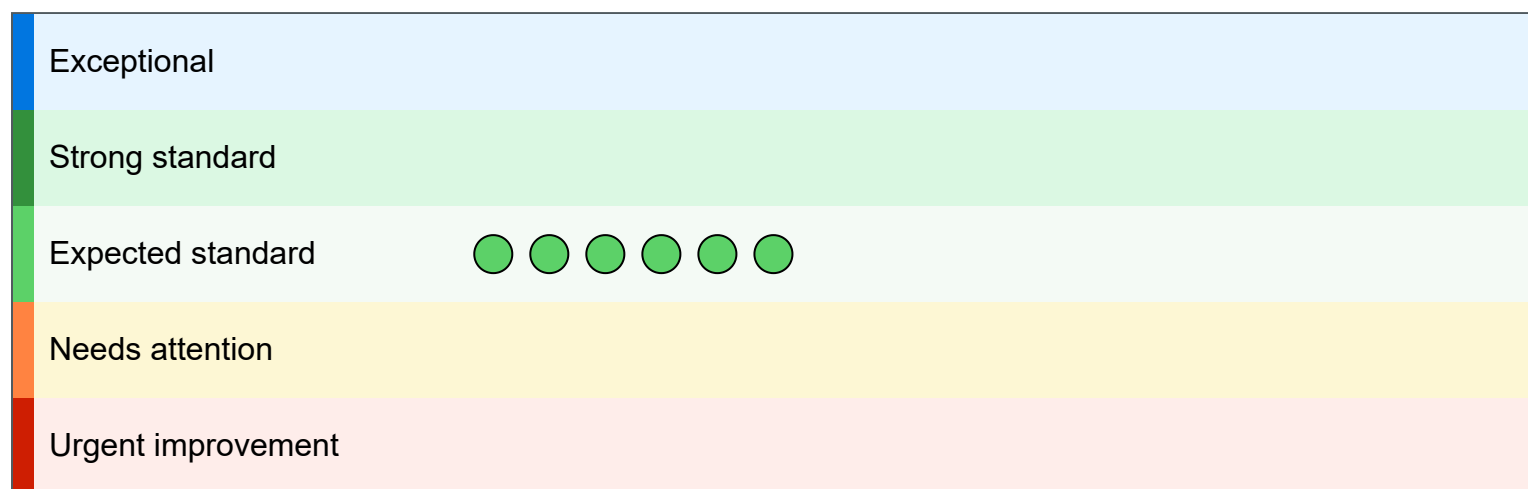


# Valley Academy

Address: Cliffe Terrace, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD8 7DX

Unique reference number (URN): 139474

## Inspection report: 17 March 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

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically learn the skills and knowledge they need to do well. They build on their prior learning and apply this effectively in their work. For example, pupils use their understanding of mathematical techniques to improve their reasoning. There is little variation in achievement for pupils with barriers to learning. They make the same steady progress through the curriculum. Many pupils arrive with gaps in the essential knowledge they rely on for later work. The school works hard to support these pupils and to help them fill these gaps. This improves over time, and these pupils access the wider curriculum with increasing confidence.

Pupils' achievement improved in 2025, particularly in English and mathematics. Despite a dip in attainment in public examinations in 2024, pupils typically make secure progress through the curriculum, relative to their starting points. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing over time. Generally, pupils are ready for their next stages. Currently, as a result of their achievement and the support that they receive, most pupils secure appropriately ambitious next steps in further education or training by the time they leave the school.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders monitor pupil absence rigorously. They track patterns closely, looking carefully at reasons for absence, especially for vulnerable pupils. This allows staff to intervene early and build strong relationships with parents and carers. Leaders make effective use of a range of strategies to support positive attendance in the face of considerable challenges. Their approach has focused on understanding barriers, distributing responsibility across staff and creating a culture of belonging. For example, pupils on part-time timetables are monitored closely and supported effectively. Overall, attendance is rapidly improving. Persistent absence is declining, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders recognise that attendance remains a significant priority for the school.

Pupils behave well. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders' strategic approach to improving behaviour has secured their high expectations around school. Leaders and staff teach the positive behaviours they expect to see consistently well. They have regular opportunities to share the school values with pupils. This is done through regular assemblies and considered interventions for those who need further support. Staff have a shared understanding of the school values and are increasingly consistent with their application of both praise and consequences. Genuine care and firm boundaries characterise the culture in school. This means that lessons start promptly and constructive relationships flourish.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Ambition is high across subjects. Leaders have maintained their focus on providing a broad and balanced curriculum to all. They have rightly prioritised consistency in lessons. Where

this is most successful, teachers model new learning effectively and pupils engage in meaningful practice. For example, in all subjects, pupils' accurate use of subject vocabulary is evident in supporting their understanding.

Teachers demonstrate awareness of the needs of more-vulnerable pupils. They adapt their teaching well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' clarity, reliable subject knowledge and effective co-working with teaching assistants support pupils in overcoming barriers to learning. Leaders take positive action to build key skills in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for those pupils with the greatest need to catch up. The use of targeted interventions and other strategies helps pupils to better access the curriculum.

Pupils experience a curriculum that is sequenced carefully to support their growing knowledge. Leaders have made thoughtful changes to the curriculum this academic year to enhance the firm foundations laid in previous years. They have worked closely with trust colleagues to refine and improve the effectiveness of teaching. Leaders are aware of further work needed to improve consistency across subjects.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Typically, the support they provide reduces most barriers to learning and wellbeing successfully. Leaders prioritise the needs of vulnerable pupils well. They identify pupils' varied needs quickly and accurately. Leaders ensure that staff receive suitable training to support pupils. This has been particularly effective in helping pupils with a diverse range of prior experiences to integrate effectively at school, with some of these pupils also being new to the country. Staff recognise the range of challenges that pupils may encounter and respond effectively to their emerging needs.

Pupils are well known by staff and leaders alike. Leaders have put in place provision to support pupils in a variety of ways. This includes impactful use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work together to make a tangible difference for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps staff to meet these pupils' needs well on the whole. Leaders regularly review the effectiveness of their approaches to ensure that they have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

Alternative provision is used sparingly and in pupils' best interests. Leaders make sure any additional support provided in school or from external agencies is effective in helping pupils grow and be increasingly ready for high-quality learning.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have brought about effective change over time. They have ensured that the best interests of pupils remain at the centre of their decisions. The inclusive culture builds on the principle that all pupils should feel part of the school and have a positive experience. Leaders demonstrate a robust understanding of the school's context and the specific barriers faced by pupils. For example, disadvantaged pupils are now progressing well in many aspects of their studies.

Leaders have prioritised raising the quality of teaching so that pupils can achieve highly. This includes providing the professional learning that staff need to be successful in their roles. Staff appreciate changes that have happened. Pupils benefit from staff who are better prepared to help them, even if teachers are not teaching their preferred subjects. Leaders' engagement with staff wellbeing reflects a clear commitment to sustainable improvement.

Despite the very recent move to the trust and some systems still being in transition, trustees have a secure understanding of the school's position. They know its strengths and those things that are developing in terms of consistency. Trustees ensure that appropriate support and challenge are in place. Oversight from the trust helps sustain momentum and ensures leaders are well supported.

Leaders have created a positive school culture underpinned by clear values and expectations. They model these values in their calm, considered leadership. Leaders' relational approach supports their focus on communication to all involved with school. For example, this has led to improvements in attendance and firm connections with the wider community and local businesses.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders are rightly proud of the way the school provides for pupils' personal development. At the centre of the curriculum is the aim for pupils to celebrate the diversity within the school community and beyond. They learn about a range of faiths, cultures and religions. Pupils develop a mature understanding of both the school values and fundamental British values. They know their responsibilities associated with treating people equally.

Pupils benefit from the regular and carefully planned occasions when they reflect on their own views and consider the perspectives of others. They describe their lived experience in the school as one which embraces diversity and difference. Staff and pupils are proud of the twice-yearly 'This is Me' days, in which the multicultural vibrancy of the school is celebrated through traditional dress, pupil-led assemblies and food. Pupils are well prepared for life when they come to leave school.

The school's careers programme is effective and wide ranging. Pupils' aspirations are broadened and raised by attendance at careers fairs, employer visits and targeted opportunities. They develop clear ambitions for what they could do in the future. Pupils go on to take up a wide range of different opportunities.

Pupils' interests and talents are nurtured through a diverse range of activities, including numerous clubs and sports, such as art, enterprise and football. Leaders are committed to ensuring inclusion within enrichment activities. They monitor participation across pupil groups carefully. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are encouraged to engage and do.

Leaders have designed an appropriate curriculum for pupils to learn about sex and healthy relationships. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe while online and in the community. They can articulate how to be safe and how to look after their mental and physical health. Pupils feel that they are well listened to by leaders. They know they can support changes

and improvements in school life. For example, pupils actively contribute through the Year 11 leadership programme and anti-bullying ambassadors.

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

Pupils are positive about life in school and being part of this distinctive community. Leaders and staff offer a warm and caring welcome to all pupils, whatever their background and prior experience. Pupils feel safe and know they are valued. They have staff to turn to, when required. Leaders seek out pupils' views and look to act on these. Pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles at school. They are proud of the contributions they are making to school life.

Staff at the school get to know pupils well. They swiftly identify the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support is then provided effectively. Where pupils have other individual needs, staff plan and adapt support to meet these needs well. This helps pupils feel safe and cared for.

Pupils are attending more often and enjoy their learning. They benefit from clear structures for learning and adjustments in their lessons. Pupils who require support benefit from appropriately targeted help.

Throughout their time in school, pupils grow in their understanding of the high expectations for behaviour. Lessons are calm and conducive to learning. Pupils value social times. They know that bullying is not acceptable. Pupils appreciate how staff act quickly to help them resolve issues.

Pupils' achievement in public examinations has improved in recent times. Alongside this, improvements to the curriculum and teaching are having a positive impact on pupils currently in the school. Across year groups and subjects, pupils are acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Pupils' wider experiences are supporting their development and raising their aspirations for the future. They are well prepared for adult life.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is consistently taught well across all subjects.
- Leaders should continue to refine their actions to secure high attendance for all pupils.

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## **About this inspection**

This school is part of Delta Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andy Barnett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Hodsman.

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 principal, vice principal, assistant principal, trustees, including the chair, executive principal, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Principal: Jane Hobbs

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### **Lead inspector:**

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

### **Team inspectors:**

Pali Dhesi, Ofsted Inspector

Mike Kilgannon, 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 17 March 2026

## **School and pupil context**

### **Total pupils**

**364**

Well 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: 1,067

### **School capacity**

**375**

Well 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: 1,153

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

**53.57%**

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: 28.9%

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

**2.75%**

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: 3.09%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**18.13%**

Above average

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

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

National average: 13.4%

### **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)

## No resourced provision

### What does this mean?

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

## All pupils' performance

### English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	45.5%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	16.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.0%	45.3%	Below

### Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	38.7	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.8	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.0	46.3	Below

### Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.01	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.29	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	31.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	6.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	19.4%	25.2%	Close to average

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	29.2	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.3	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.5	35.0	Below

### Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.51	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.59	-0.57	Close to average

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	31.4%	53.1%	-21.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	6.9%	53.1%	-46.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	19.4%	52.4%	-33.0 pp

## Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	29.2	50.4	-21.2
2023/24 (final)	22.3	50.0	-27.7

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	29.5	50.3	-20.8

### Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.51	0.16	-1.67
2022/23 (final)	-0.59	0.17	-0.76

### Destinations after 16

#### Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	80%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	79%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	80%	94%	Not available

### Absence

#### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.5%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.5%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.0%	9.0%	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)	38.1%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	34.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	38.9%	26.5%	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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