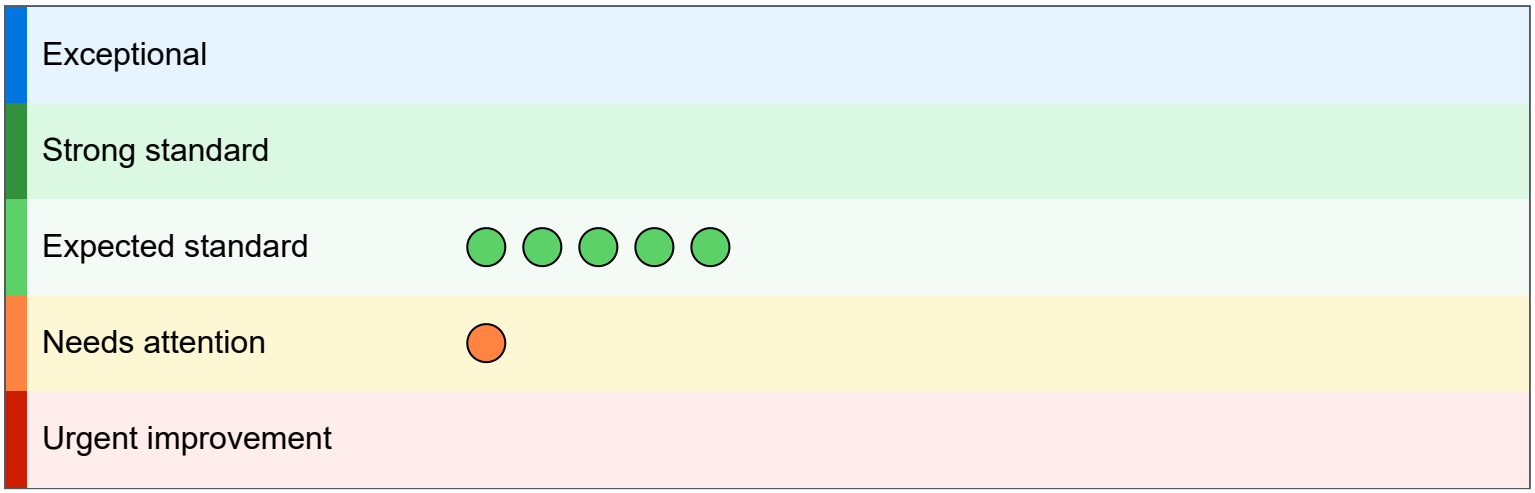
The Featherstone Academy

Address: Pontefract Road, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF7 5AJ

Unique reference number (URN): 138593

Inspection report: 30 June 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 achieve well. They develop their knowledge and skills over time. This is reflected in their work, which becomes more complex and of higher quality as they move through school.

Pupils generally attain in line with national averages in national tests and examinations at the end of key stage 4. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is generally in line with the same group nationally.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress from their different starting points. They typically gain the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. Pupils who need to improve their basic skills in reading and mathematics receive effective support. This support helps them catch up with their peers.

Pupils leave school well prepared for their next steps in education. Almost all pupils go on to destinations that reflect their abilities and aspirations.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. They have put in place a broad, well-sequenced curriculum that allows pupils to gradually build their knowledge over time. Leaders have started to further adapt the curriculum to meet the starting points of pupils when they join the school.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to teach effectively. They generally check pupils' understanding and adapt their approach when needed. Teachers track the progress that pupils make over time. They plan lessons that let pupils revisit what they have learned. This helps pupils to build on their knowledge. Leaders have recently trained staff to help pupils' confidence in speaking and listening. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary confidently.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who have gaps in their basic skills in reading and mathematics. These pupils receive effective support that helps them to catch up with their peers. Teachers typically adjust their lessons to ensure all pupils, especially those with barriers to learning, can access the same material. This adaptation is not always effective for all pupils, particularly for those with more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that a small minority of pupils cannot always access the same curriculum as their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders are committed to inclusion. They support pupils with a wide range of additional needs so that they can participate in lessons and broader opportunities alongside their peers. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately on joining the school. Leaders put in place a range of measures to remove pupils' barriers to learning. Staff check that these

are effective and adapt them if necessary. This approach helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care to thrive.

There is a local authority-funded specialist resource base for pupils with communication and language needs. Pupils at the base receive extra specialist support, which helps them to attend most of their lessons with their peers. Staff typically adapt lessons to make sure that all pupils can access the curriculum. However, some pupils with complex special educational needs do not benefit from additional changes to the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care participate in trips and clubs. Leaders use the funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully and effectively to improve their attendance and attainment. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision, which is well matched to their interests and additional needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have identified specific areas for improvement and developed effective plans to address the weaknesses in those areas. Leaders are supported in this work by the trust. They use effective quality assurance systems to check how well the school supports pupils. Staff professional development is closely linked to leaders' priorities for school improvement. This has been effective in improving the quality of teaching across the school.

Staff appreciate the professional development programme. This includes early career teachers, who are well supported by the school. Staff typically take pride in working at this school and understand the vision that leaders have. They generally feel that leaders are considerate of both their workload and wellbeing.

Trustees use a range of approaches to assure themselves of the school's performance. They regularly visit the school, alongside colleagues from the wider trust team. Trustees challenge leaders while providing additional resources to support school development when needed. The board of trustees fulfils its statutory duties.

Leaders work well with various external partners, both inside and outside the trust. Leaders secure additional expertise to support pupils, either through direct work with them or by providing specialist training for staff. Leaders collaborate with external agencies to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those known to social care, have the same opportunities as their peers. They make decisions in the best interests of these pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have put in place a thoughtful personal development programme that addresses the needs of pupils. The curriculum is well planned. It helps pupils develop their knowledge and understanding over time. Pupils learn about important issues such as tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. They learn to respect and understand differences between themselves and others. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate

manner. They also learn how to stay safe in their community and online. Staff teach them how to keep themselves fit and well, both physically and mentally.

Leaders have purposefully included a wide range of opportunities in the planned curriculum for pupils in key stage 3. Pupils get involved in various activities, including gardening, photography, crochet and more. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy a residential trip together. These opportunities encourage pupils to challenge themselves and try new things. This aspect of the curriculum is carefully designed to build pupils' confidence and resilience while broadening their horizons and helping them to understand the wider world. There is a range of after-school clubs on offer as well as trips and visits. Leaders ensure that wider opportunities are accessible to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as to disadvantaged pupils.

There is appropriate pastoral support in place for pupils. Pupils know who to ask for help if they feel they need it. The pastoral team closely monitors pupils known to social care or those who are vulnerable.

There is a well-structured careers education programme in place. Careers provision is effective and meets the needs of pupils. All pupils receive independent careers advice from an appropriately qualified person. Pupils with SEND receive additional support to help them plan their next steps after leaving school. As a result, almost all pupils leave school to go on to destinations that match their aspirations and abilities.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Overall attendance has declined and is below the national average. Leaders have begun to identify the main barriers that pupils face in attending school regularly. They have put in place some interventions to remove these barriers. This work is starting to show some improvements for some groups of pupils, but there is more to do to improve their attendance.

Pupils generally behave well. They treat each other and staff with respect. There are clear rules in place, which everyone understands. Staff typically communicate behaviour expectations consistently. Leaders have implemented appropriate adjustments to behaviour systems for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as other vulnerable pupils.

Pupils typically show positive attitudes to learning and work well in their lessons. Teachers deal with any low-level disruptions quickly and effectively. Incidents of bullying and other more serious poor behaviour are rare. When they do happen, they are handled well. Leaders have focused on reducing suspensions in recent years. This has been effective, and suspensions have reduced over time. However, a small minority of pupils do not receive help to improve their behaviour quickly enough. This means that they receive repeated consequences, causing them to miss significant time in lessons.

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

Pupils are safe and well supported at this school. Staff keep a close eye on pupils and are quick to step in if extra support is needed. Pupils typically treat staff and each other with respect. Lessons are usually calm and focused, helping pupils concentrate on their learning. There are clear rules and routines in place, which everyone knows and understands. Bullying and other forms of discrimination are uncommon and are handled quickly and effectively. However, a small minority of pupils do not receive the appropriate help they need to improve their behaviour. This means they receive repeated consequences and lose a significant amount of time out of lessons. Most pupils attend school regularly, but a notable number miss too many days. This means that they miss out on important learning.

Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. It is organised to help them build their knowledge and understanding step by step as they move through the school. Lessons are usually taught effectively and are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. However, teachers do not always make effective adaptations for pupils with the most complex SEND needs, which means that on occasion they do not learn effectively. Pupils who need extra help to improve their basic skills in reading and mathematics receive this support. Pupils generally attain outcomes similar to those of other pupils in national examinations at the end of key stage 4.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their resilience and to gain a sense of the wider world. In key stage 3, pupils participate in various activities each week. These include skiing, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, sports and performing arts. There is a range of after-school clubs and activities. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, have access to these opportunities. Pupils receive help and guidance in planning their next steps after leaving school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their revised approach to attendance has the required impact and results in swift intervention, especially for vulnerable pupils or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are severely absent from school.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently adapt the curriculum and their approaches to teaching effectively so that they meet the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders should improve their oversight and analysis to better understand the impact of their work on pupils' behaviour and on the strengthening of support for pupils who require more help to behave appropriately in school.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Resilience Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive

officer (CEO), Saira Luffman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Annette Hall.

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, school leaders, teachers, other staff and pupils. They also spoke with the CEO and trustees during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for pupils with communication and language needs for 20 pupils.

The school currently makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Principal: Julia McClusky

Lead inspector:
Gemma Dixon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Steve Lewis, Ofsted Inspector
Dan Whieldon, Ofsted Inspector
Katrina Gueli, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

524
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

600
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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

41.03%
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: 28.9%

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

7.63%
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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.37%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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 (final)	35.6%	45.4%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	42.0%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.2%	45.3%	Close to average

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 (final)	41.6	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.6	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	44.0	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.33	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.12	-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 (final)	25.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	24.2%	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 (final)	36.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.2	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.84	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.77	-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 (final)	25.8%	53.1%	-27.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	53.1%	-19.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	24.2%	52.4%	-28.2 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 (final)	36.2	50.4	-14.2
2023/24 (final)	33.2	50.0	-16.9
2022/23 (final)	33.2	50.3	-17.1

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)	-0.84	0.16	-1.01
2022/23 (final)	-0.77	0.17	-0.94

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 (revised)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	83%	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 (3 term)	9.6%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	24.0%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	27.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	21.8%	26.5%	Below

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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