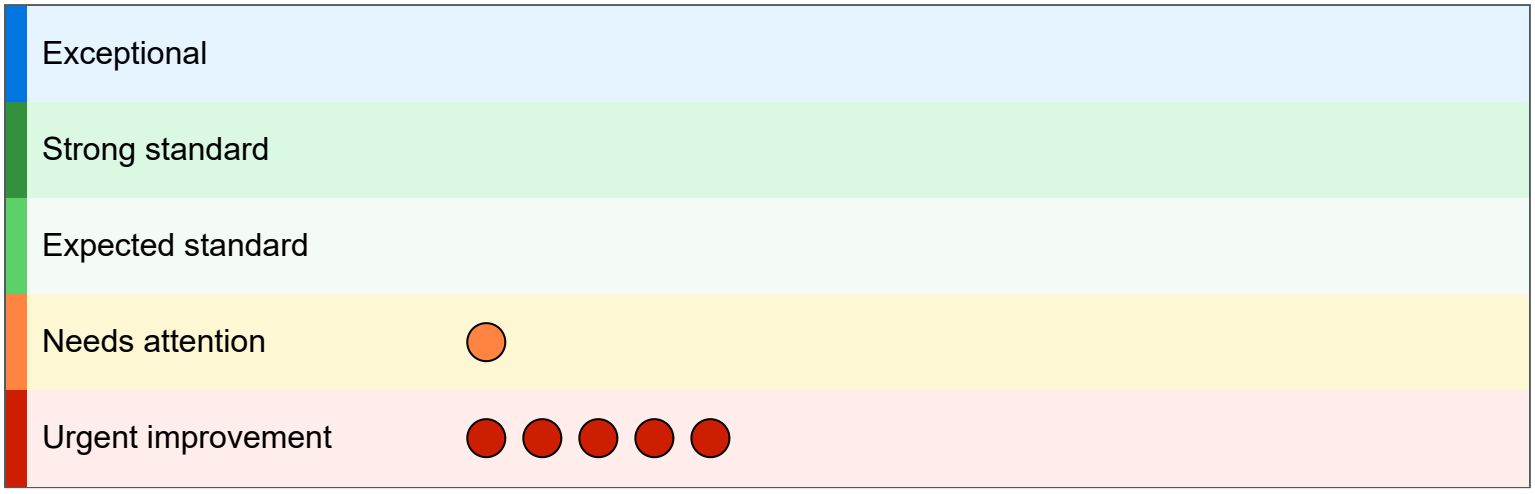
Millfields Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Address: Willington Avenue, Eastham, Wirral, Merseyside, CH62 9EB

Unique reference number (URN): 136056

Inspection report: 23 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.

This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide 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.

Needs attention

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Leaders have established a suitable personal development programme. Pupils develop an understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of healthy relationships. Pupils understand the risks that they might face when online. However, the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is not taught well enough. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it might be. For example, although pupils know about fundamental British values, their understanding about what these values mean is limited. In addition, weaknesses in the broader curriculum impact pupils' cultural development. For example, pupils struggle to recall information about the artists that they have studied, or about key people and events in history.

Leaders provide some opportunities for pupils that broaden their learning and experiences. Leaders make sure that if pupils face challenges in their lives, they have access to the same opportunities as their peers. Pupils represent the school in competitions, take part in clubs and attend educational visits. However, pupils struggle to link these visits to their learning in the curriculum.

Pupils are inspired by the school's careers fair, where they meet people from a range of professions. Pupils understand the link between the subjects that they learn and potential careers in the future.

Interim leaders have prioritised pastoral support for pupils and families. However, the impact of this support is limited because staff's time is taken to help pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour. This reduces the time available to support pupils' wellbeing.

Urgent improvement

Achievement

Urgent improvement

Pupils have not achieved well, over time, and this continues to be the case. Interim leaders have not had sufficient time to bring about necessary improvements. In recent years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been well below that of other pupils nationally. Pupils that face disadvantage attain significantly less well than disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Pupils do not secure the important foundations in learning, including reading and writing, that they need in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils in these key stages have many gaps in their knowledge. As pupils progress through the school these gaps widen. Pupils struggle to acquire new learning. This hampers their achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve well. The gaps that many pupils with SEND have in their learning remain unaddressed and so widen over time.

In the early years, children progress well through the curriculum from their starting points. However, this progress is not built on in subsequent years. Pupils are ill prepared for their future education.

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement

Many pupils struggle to attend school regularly. Over time, leaders have not provided sufficient support for pupils or their families to help them to attend more often. Interim leaders have recently begun to improve the way that attendance is managed. Checks about why pupils are absent have improved. Interim leaders have begun to monitor attendance regularly. While leaders' recent actions have resulted in improved attendance rates for a few pupils, overall attendance is not improving and remains low when compared to the national average.

In the early years, staff help children to focus well on their learning. This is not the case in other year groups. Most lessons are disrupted, for example, by pupils calling out. Teachers do not address the disruption effectively. This makes it difficult for pupils to focus on their learning.

Some pupils struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour. When this is the case, staff provide effective support to help pupils to calm down and regain control. When bullying happens, interim leaders take it seriously and deal with it. Interim leaders have begun to improve behaviour in school. At lunchtimes and breaktimes, pupils treat each other kindly. Older pupils help younger pupils in their play. There is a harmonious atmosphere. However, staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons are too low.

Curriculum and teaching

Urgent improvement

Over time, leaders have not implemented a suitable curriculum for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to learn. The curriculum that is in place is not taught well. Pupils have large gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not check or address these gaps. This means that pupils routinely struggle to acquire new learning. The gaps in their knowledge persist and widen. Leaders have not established a curriculum that helps pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 secure the important foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are not ready for the next stages of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils that require additional help do not receive the support that they need. Teachers do not adapt learning for pupils that need it. As a result, pupils fall further behind where they are expected to be in the curriculum.

In the early years, children do receive the help that they need to achieve well. Staff ensure that children develop a secure knowledge in the early stages of phonics. Children begin to read simple words and sentences. Teachers help children to form their letters correctly and write simple sentences. This positive start is not built on as pupils move through the school.

Inclusion

Urgent improvement

Over time, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not received suitable support to help them to learn. Interim leaders have begun to improve support for pupils with SEND by addressing a backlog in referrals for the external help that some pupils need. Interim leaders have begun to introduce new systems to check pupils' needs. However, this work is in its infancy. Currently, pupils' needs are not identified early enough or precisely enough. Actions identified to support pupils are not used in classrooms. As a result, pupils with SEND struggle to acquire the important learning that they need.

Some pupils face additional challenges in their lives. When this is the case, leaders provide support for their wellbeing. This support is typically effective. However, the funding that the school receives to support pupils that face disadvantage is not well used. Interim leaders have recently taken action to address this. At this stage, it is too early to see the impact of this.

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement

Leadership and staffing have recently gone through a period of turbulence. From March 2026, an interim executive board (IEB) took over the governance of the school. The IEB and interim leaders have used their expertise to identify some areas for urgent improvement, such as safeguarding and pupils' safety. They have made sure that pupils are well cared for and safe. They have also prioritised partnership with parents and carers. Pupils are warmly welcomed into the school at the start of each day. However, leadership in this school remains fragile and uncertain.

The lack of stability in leadership has impacted negatively on staff's professional learning, the implementation of the curriculum and support for pupils who are disadvantaged or for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including the most disadvantaged, do not receive the support that they need. While pupils sometimes receive the help that they need to improve their wellbeing, they are not helped to overcome barriers to their learning, for example, by addressing gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils that face additional challenges in their lives are falling further behind in their learning.

Over time, leaders have not ensured that pupils receive an adequate education that prepares them well for their future lives. Sometimes, decisions are made that are not in the best interests of pupils. Over time, leaders' actions, for example, to improve the curriculum and pupils' achievement have not been rapid enough.

Staff appreciate interim leaders' support for their wellbeing. However, the professional learning that staff receive is not leading to improvements rapidly enough.

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are disadvantaged, do not benefit from a suitable, well-taught curriculum that helps them to learn. The recently established interim leadership team have identified areas for urgent improvement. However, leaders' actions have not brought about improvements for pupils in other important areas, such as learning and achievement. Currently, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Pupils struggle to focus on their learning because the curriculum is not well taught.

Pupils treat each other well at social times. If pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, staff support them to get back on track. When bullying happens, leaders take action to make sure that it stops. However, staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons are too low. Pupils often disrupt lessons. Staff do not take effective action to address this disruption.

New interim leaders provide a warm welcome to pupils as they arrive at the start of the school day. Pupils are safe and well cared for as a result of leaders' recent actions. However, leaders and staff do not identify pupils' needs early enough or precisely enough. Pupils with SEND and those who face challenges, do not receive the support that they need. Pupils' barriers to wellbeing are identified and tackled. However, the barriers that pupils face to their learning are not addressed appropriately. Pupils have many gaps in their learning. These gaps are widening.

Pupils do not attend school regularly. Many pupils are absent and for many pupils this is not improving. Pupils miss too much learning. This hampers their achievement.

Leaders provide pupils with some after-school clubs, opportunities to represent the school at sporting events and visits to places of interest. However, pupils' cultural development is limited because they do not benefit from a well-considered and well-taught curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should urgently improve the achievement of pupils in the school.
- Leaders should raise staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning.
- Leaders should make sure that there is a suitable, well-taught curriculum in place for all subjects.
- Leaders should make sure that teachers address instances of low-level disruption so that all pupils can focus on their learning.
- Leaders should make sure that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge are assessed and addressed by teachers, so that gaps close over time.
- Leaders should make sure that all staff adapt learning for pupils that need it.
- Leaders should make sure that plans to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are precise and acted upon in classrooms.
- Leaders should make sure that their actions lead to demonstrable improvement to pupils' attendance at school.

- Leaders should make sure that the positive start children receive in the early years is built on in Year 1 and beyond.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should make sure that the programme of professional learning for staff is of high quality and leads to improvements in teaching, including the delivery of the personal, health, social and economic education curriculum.
- The interim executive board should act urgently to bring about improvements in the teaching of the curriculum and the achievement of pupils.

About this inspection

An interim executive board (IEB) took over the governance of the school in March 2026. The chair of the interim executive board is Julie Barlow.

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

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be 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.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection(s) we carry out.

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.

At the time of the inspection interim leaders were leading the school.

Inspectors spoke with the interim leaders and other senior leaders, governors, including the chair of the IEB, staff and pupils in the school during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chester. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2018.

At the time of this inspection there were 5 or fewer children in the early years.

The school runs a breakfast club for pupils in the school.

Headteacher: Michelle Holford

Lead inspector:
Jen Sloan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Keith Pullen, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

98
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: 272

School capacity

210
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

60.87%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

5.10%
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

32.65%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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

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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	30%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	0%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	60%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	38%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	73%	Below

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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	17%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	11%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	43%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	22%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	20%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	11%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	30%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	11%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33%	59%	Below

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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	17%	68%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	11%	69%	-58 pp
2023/24 (final)	0%	67%	-67 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	66%	-40 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	43%	80%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	22%	81%	-59 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	78%	-32 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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	20%	78%	-58 pp
2024/25 (final)	11%	78%	-67 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	78%	-61 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	77%	-51 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	30%	80%	-50 pp
2024/25 (final)	11%	81%	-69 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	33%	79%	-46 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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.8%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	43.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	38.2%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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