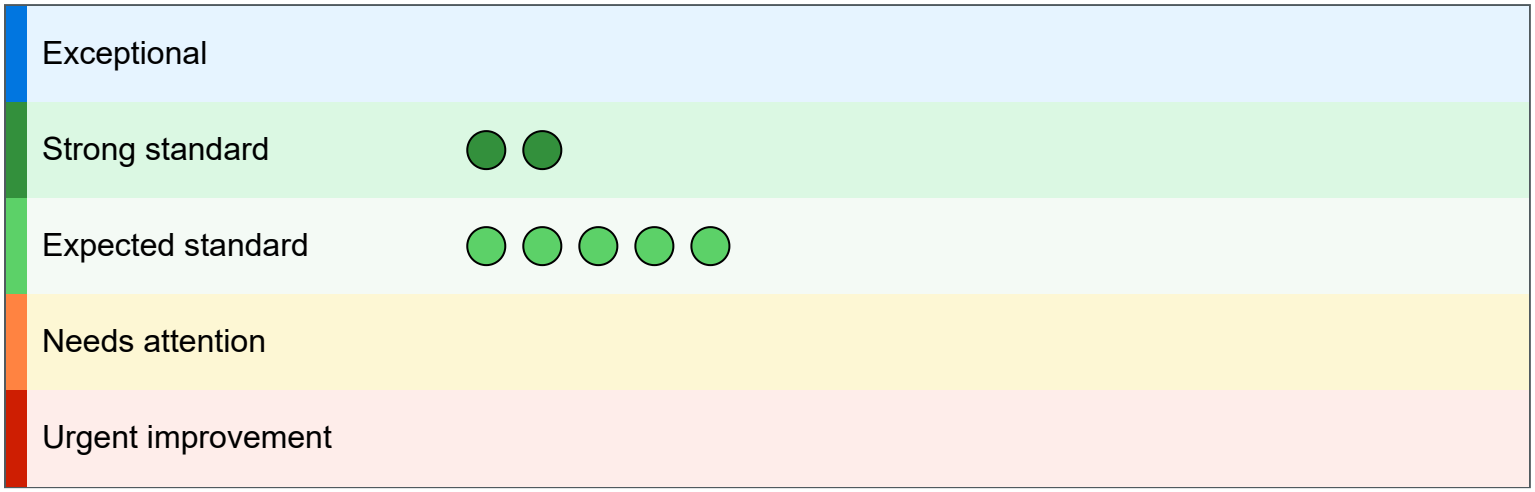
Mayfield School

Address: Gloucester Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 3HN

Unique reference number (URN): 119889

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.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils’ attendance overall is above the national average for similar schools. For some pupils, their attendance reflects the complexity of their individual health needs and family circumstances. Leaders understand these challenges very well and work nimbly to reduce the barriers to attending school with sensitivity and compassion. Pupils enjoy the warm welcome they receive every day. Leaders work tenaciously with families, medical professionals and other agencies to ensure they cater for pupils' changing needs. This work is highly successful. Pupils grow in confidence and enjoy taking an active part in school life. Most pupils attend well and feel happy and confident in school.

There are highly effective strategies in place to support pupils with their special educational needs and/or disabilities, including for those with autism. Pupils show excellent attitudes to school as a result. Positive, nurturing and respectful relationships underpin the school’s approach to behaviour. Staff hold comprehensive knowledge about each pupil. They understand behaviour as a form of communication and respond calmly and skilfully. Quiet spaces and personalised approaches meet pupils’ emotional and sensory needs well. Over time, pupils learn to make choices, follow expectations and build lasting relationships with peers and adults. Post-16 students act as positive role models for younger pupils. Staff do not tolerate bullying or unkind behaviour, which they address promptly.

Inclusion

Strong standard

The school’s inclusive approach is a golden thread running through all its work. Leaders and staff have an expert grasp of pupils’ starting points. Their needs and barriers are identified swiftly and accurately. Leaders draw on detailed assessments, specialist advice and clear communication with families. Education, health and care plans are carefully co-produced and frequently reviewed. As a result, pupils receive highly effective, individualised support.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, particularly in developing their communication, emotional regulation and independence. Staff provide therapeutic support, including art, speech and occupational therapy, to pupils who need it. Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively. Additional funding is used strategically to strengthen their wellbeing and improve their access to learning. For instance, this might include ‘rebound’ therapy, holiday club provision and buffet clubs for pupils who struggle with food aversions. This targeted support has a positive impact, helping pupils with multiple vulnerabilities to attend often, feel included and make secure progress from their starting points.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some of these needs are highly complex. Staff draw on expert knowledge and confident practice to meet these needs skilfully. Leaders and staff work closely with specialists and external agencies, ensuring that support is comprehensive and well coordinated. This input has a positive influence on pupils’ regulation, communication and physical development. For example, physiotherapists work alongside school staff to deliver sensory swimming sessions tailored to pupils’ individual circumstances.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders recognise that pupils' achievement takes many forms. Pupils make suitable progress towards the targets in their education, health and care plans. This is particularly positive in communication and physical development, emotional regulation and readiness to learn. For example, staff help pupils with physical disabilities make measurable progress in sitting, standing and walking. Additionally, information from the school's 'JAM' assessments and from accredited qualifications, where appropriate, shows that pupils typically achieve positively from their individual starting points. Over time, pupils develop communication, independence and life skills that prepare them very well for their next steps.

The way the school prepares pupils for the future is a strength. As part of this work, leaders prioritise securing pupils' foundational knowledge. Leaders recognise how essential it is for pupils with complex needs to engage meaningfully with learning and to develop the skills that they need for independent adult life. However, when teaching lacks a sharp focus on reinforcing and consolidating learning, pupils sometimes miss chances to strengthen and embed the core skills they need to progress confidently.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have designed a broad and inclusive curriculum that reflects the needs of pupils across the school. For instance, it places an appropriate emphasis on personal development and preparation for adulthood. Leaders have an informed understanding of the curriculum they provide, which they continually develop. Leaders have recently further refined the small building blocks of learning that they want pupils to master.

The curriculum places communication and language at its core. Staff use effective strategies, including visual timetables and symbols, to help pupils learn. Staff explain learning clearly and break content into manageable steps. However, at times, staff do not deliver this content in a logical order. This makes it harder for pupils to secure their learning one step at a time.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils gaining foundational knowledge, whether that means developing eye gaze to make choices or recognising early environmental sounds. There is a clear focus on securing early mathematics and English knowledge, including reading. Phonics is taught effectively to those who need it. However, sometimes, staff miss opportunities to extend or consolidate pupils' foundational knowledge. For example, they sometimes overlook chances to further strengthen pupils' transcription skills, including pen grip and letter formation. When this happens, these pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders understand the school's context and pupils' needs very well. They have built a culture rooted in a precise understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities and their individual circumstances. Leaders know what is working well and what

needs to improve. Together with governors, they have astutely managed the challenges of changes in staffing, growth in pupil numbers and construction works to improve the school site.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development in school and through the wider networks the school contributes to. They receive and share specialist expertise, including through ‘teach meet’ events across a network of special and mainstream schools, strengthening their own practice while helping to develop others. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders’ efforts to look after their wellbeing and workload. They feel supported and valued, including teachers at the beginning of their careers.

Parents and carers highly appreciate the way the school enables their children to ‘develop skills not thought possible’. They value the way staff have pupils’ best interests at heart. Parents speak warmly of the care given and are confident that their children’s needs are met.

Those responsible for governance know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties effectively, such as in their oversight of safeguarding. Governors are well informed. They provide leaders with appropriate challenge and support. School leaders and governors are unified in their ambition to give all pupils, particularly those with the greatest needs, the best possible chance in life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils’ personal development and the pastoral support they receive are at the heart of the school’s work. Pupils access a rich, coherently planned set of experiences that significantly strengthen their learning, build their character and lift their self-esteem. The school also designs activities that reflect its ‘dare to dream’ ethos, enabling pupils to achieve goals their families may once have thought out of reach, such as eating in a restaurant, travelling abroad or going on a train. Staff create purposeful experiences that help make these ambitions a reality.

Through the recently strengthened personal, social and health education curriculum, staff help pupils learn about key topics that prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and perspectives through meaningful events, such as Holi and Chinese New Year. Staff help pupils understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy, to stay safe online and the importance of tolerance and mutual respect. Staff use real life experiences to deepen pupils’ understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils recently elected a student council, giving them first-hand experience of democracy and making choices.

Pupils and post-16 students take part in a wide range of community events and real-world experiences that build their confidence as active citizens in their school and local community. For example, they participate in charity activities such as the ‘Santa dash’ and fundraising for Down’s Syndrome day. Pupils regularly engage with the community, meeting figures such as a paralympic athlete, welcoming visits from the police and exploring everyday places, including a pet shop, bakery and the post office. Leadership groups such as the ‘A Team’ also contribute to the school community by helping to develop the reflection garden. Pupils and students build communication, teamwork and financial literacy through these experiences, preparing them well for adulthood.

Pupils and students in the post-16 provision receive appropriate careers guidance, work-related learning and support to help them prepare for their next steps. Some pupils embark on work experience. Leaders support pupils well in choosing their next steps.

Post 16 provision **Expected standard**

Post-16 students benefit from a curriculum that covers a suitable range of subjects, with a focus on functional skills, personal development and work-related learning. Leaders have recently strengthened the post-16 curriculum. It now includes a suite of appropriate accreditations, such as ASDAN and the Duke of Edinburgh's gold award, giving students access to a wide range of recognised qualifications and preparing them more effectively for their next steps.

Leaders ensure that staff usually teach the curriculum well. For instance, staff usually adjust their teaching so that students with complex needs can engage and learn well. Staff carefully monitor students' progress and achievement through a range of approaches to assessment. The majority of students make steady progress from their starting points. All students move on to further education, training or other programmes and placements that are suitable for them.

Students contribute strongly to the school community. Staff are ambitious about what students can achieve. They take part in enterprise projects at the summer and Christmas fairs, running stalls, managing budgets, shopping for materials and seeing their products through from design to sale. The College Café gives students authentic opportunities to practise real-world skills, such as speaking to the public, serving food and handling money. Students, together with leaders, actively promote the value of employing young people with additional needs, educating the wider community about the contribution these students can make.

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

Pupils are cared for deeply at this school. They are valued as individuals, and they know their voice matters. Staff know pupils well and understand the complex range of needs within the school community. Pupils arrive to a calm and harmonious school where well-established routines are clear and familiar. This helps pupils feel safe, settled and ready to begin their day. Parents and carers speak very positively about the difference the school has made to their children’s confidence, wellbeing and engagement with education.

Pupils enjoy their learning because it is matched precisely to their individual interests. They access a broad curriculum that reflects their differing needs and aspirations. Leaders’ commitment to their vision of ‘one size fits one’ is reflected in the precision and care with which staff identify and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Pupils with sensory and physical needs are well supported to engage fully in learning. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to engage with a variety of stimuli. Pupils thrive because leaders ensure that the requirements of pupils' education, health and care plans

are precisely matched to their individual curriculum routes, career aspirations and required support.

Pupils attend school regularly and love being at school. They value friendships with their peers highly. Across key stages, pupils benefit from structured routines, consistent approaches and staff who understand their needs. The thoughtfully tailored environment and outdoor space help pupils to develop confidence and independence. Pupils learn to make choices, solve problems and manage everyday tasks. Any unkind behaviour, such as bullying, is rare and dealt with quickly and sensitively.

Enrichment is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils relish the opportunities on offer to them. These help to develop and broaden pupils' understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils enjoy participating in athletic competitions with other special schools and performing in the 'Mayfield's got talent' show.

Next steps

- Leaders should make certain that pupils secure the necessary knowledge and fluency in foundational knowledge in readiness for their next learning steps.
- Leaders should ensure that staff embed the recently implemented curriculums by designing learning in a clear, logical sequence.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Graham Robinson.

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 headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead, during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of the virtual school.

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 school does not make use of alternative provision.

The school caters for pupils with a wide range of needs. These include autism spectrum disorder, complex medical needs and sensory impairment.

The school has a small number of children who attend early years provision. Due to the small numbers, this provision is not reported on separately. Inspectors gathered evidence about the experiences and outcomes of these pupils, and this evidence is included in the inspection findings.

Headteacher: Ian Dickson

Lead inspector:
Kate Bowker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Jen Ashworth, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

129

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.

School capacity

133

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.10%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

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).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty, PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty,

What does this mean?

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

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
2023 leavers (revised)	100%
2022 leavers (revised)	100%
2021 leavers (revised)	86%

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
2024/25 (3 term)	10.0%
2023/24 (3 term)	10.2%
2022/23 (3 term)	10.3%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	34.3%
2023/24 (3 term)	36.8%
2022/23 (3 term)	35.1%

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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