

Knowsley Junior School

Address: Stoneleigh Road, Springhead, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL4 4BH

Unique reference number (URN): 105670

Inspection report: 23 June 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Typically, most Year 6 pupils attain well in the national reading, writing and mathematics tests and assessments. Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well. Overall, pupils' attainment is close to the national average. Pupils become fluent readers and writers and most use number accurately to calculate and solve problems. However, some pupils are less secure in their number and grammar knowledge. This is reflected in the most recent results of the Year 4 multiplication check. Nonetheless, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils generally progress well through the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. They can talk with some confidence about their learning. For example, in history, pupils recall learning from a range of periods, such as the Victorians and ancient Egyptians. They understand important information, like the significance of the River Nile in early Egyptian civilisations.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Typically, pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have taken positive action to address the dip that has occurred in the attendance of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the attendance of these pupils now matches that of other pupils. However, leaders sometimes do not make best use of the most up-to-date guidance and research to inform their attendance strategy.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They listen carefully to their teachers. Playtimes are harmonious because pupils get on well with each other. Staff are alert to any behaviour issues, including any bullying or any discriminatory behaviour. Leaders act decisively to quickly resolve any concerns, including any that take place online. Staff provide high-quality support to help any pupils who struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour. That said, leaders' systems for recording and analysing incidents lack rigour. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to spot patterns and tackle any emerging common areas of relatively weaker behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. It enables pupils to make links with other subjects and with real life. Leaders consider pupils' prior learning before they start at school in Year 3. They use this information to identify and address the gaps in knowledge that pupils may have. Typically, the curriculum is designed so that pupils learn new knowledge in a logical way.

More recently, leaders have prioritised developing pupils' basic skills, particularly in writing, grammar and mathematics. This work has borne fruit. Teaching in these areas is helping pupils to succeed in the curriculum.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. Staff carefully explain new learning. In the main, the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully tailored to their stages of development. Teachers use assessment information to help them target pupils who require extra support.

Reading is a priority for the school. Pupils who join school with gaps in their phonics knowledge are typically supported well. This helps them to develop their confidence and fluency in reading.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a welcoming school. Pupils with different starting points and learning needs are warmly embraced. Leaders have the same high ambition for all pupils. They successfully reduce obstacles that may prevent vulnerable pupils from thriving and achieving well.

Leaders use additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive high-quality wellbeing support and counselling. Any barriers to vulnerable pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities are also reduced. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), fully benefit from the school's wider development offer.

The systems that leaders use to identify the needs of pupils with SEND are effective. Leaders ensure a smooth transition for pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, when they begin the school in Year 3. Typically, the support that pupils with SEND receive in class helps them to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Drawing upon external expertise when appropriate, leaders ensure that the help that vulnerable pupils receive is effective. For example, pupils known to social care flourish due to the positive way in which the school supports these pupils. Similarly, the school's positive collaboration with alternative provision providers supports pupils with social and emotional needs to develop their self-regulation strategies to manage their behaviour.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a nurturing environment that supports pupils' wellbeing. The school ensures that pupils enjoy a well-established programme that promotes their personal development. This programme is tailored to the school's context and to the needs of its pupils. Leaders ensure that the programme is accessible to all pupils. This includes vulnerable pupils such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have woven the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum carefully into their programme. Pupils learn about important topics in an age-appropriate way. For example, older pupils find out about the physical and emotional changes that happen during puberty.

Staff teach pupils about tolerance and embracing the differences that exist between people. This includes respecting different family structures, faiths and cultures. Pupils show

respectful attitudes to staff and each other. They know about fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law.

Leaders prioritise pupils' emotional and physical health. They provide high-quality wellbeing care to pupils who need it. Pupils speak confidently about different ways to maintain their wellbeing. These include managing their screen time and using strategies, such as exercise and breathing techniques.

Pupils learn about local and national risks, such as road safety and keeping safe near local reservoirs. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they work online. This work is enhanced through assemblies as well as input from external agencies, such as the police and fire service.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of different extra-curricular activities on offer. These include attending sports events and playing in the school's orchestra. Pupils value their positions of responsibility, such as their roles as sports leaders. They enjoy attending different trips and visits, describing how these activities develop their independence, resilience and personal interests. Overall, the school's wider development programme prepares pupils well for life beyond primary school.

Needs attention

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have a broad understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, up until recently, the school's systems have not enabled leaders or governors to have sufficient oversight of important aspects of its work. This includes the recording of some minor safeguarding incidents, school development priorities and the analysis of behaviour issues.

Over time, governors have not held the school to account well enough. More recently, there have been recent improvements to the level of challenge that governors provide. This is particularly notable with regard to their safeguarding responsibilities and other aspects of the school's work. However, this work is at a relatively early stage of development.

Typically, staff access the training that they need to help them deliver the curriculum well. However, leaders do not ensure that the professional learning programme aligns closely with the school's improvement priorities.

The school has experienced some turbulence over the past year in leadership. This period of instability has been managed well through the support that the school has received from the local authority and an interim leadership team.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils' interests are at the forefront of their work. They share a common commitment to make the school the best it can be. Parents and carers are positive about the recent changes that have been made. Staff's morale and wellbeing have

rapidly improved. They appreciate the support from the leadership team. Staff value the way that leaders consider their workload when making decisions about the school.

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

Pupils are proud to be part of this caring and harmonious school. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and with each other.

Pupils are valued members of the school community. They contribute to the life of the school in different ways. For example, pupils take on roles as school councillors and eco-warriors. They enjoy taking part in charity fundraising events. Pupils participate in environmental work, such as collecting litter and planting flowers to attract bees. They speak confidently about the difference that their work makes to the school and to the wider community. These experiences support pupils' confidence and sense of belonging.

Pupils value the support that they receive from kind and caring staff. This includes pupils from vulnerable groups, such as those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care. This helps to reduce their barriers to learning. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They have positive attitudes to school. Pupils behave well. They are polite and friendly. Bullying is rare. Teachers quickly resolve any incidents of unkind words or behaviour.

Pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum, which has been designed to take account of the school's context, pupils' learning needs and their starting points. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They want to come to school to learn each day. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils take pride in their achievements. They generally achieve well. As a result, pupils are typically well prepared for the challenges of high school.

Next steps

- Building on recent gains, leaders should ensure that they have a more effective oversight of the systems and processes within the school, such as the recording of behaviour incidents, so that they can taken action as required and check the impact of school improvement priorities.
 - Leaders should ensure that they extend staff's professional development programme, so that it is closely aligned to school improvement priorities and further develops staff's expertise to deliver the curriculum.
 - Governors should build on the positive steps that they have taken to hold leaders to account by further developing their expertise so that they can offer leaders informed support and challenge.
 - Leaders should further develop pupils' basic skills in number and grammar so that pupils achieve as well in these areas as in other subjects.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Barter.

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, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses 2 alternative provision providers.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the school, including a new headteacher and a new chair of governors. Both of these leaders very recently took up their posts.

Headteacher: Thomas Bunn

Lead inspector:

Louise McArdle, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kathryn Nichol, Ofsted Inspector

Rachael Alarcon, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

265

Close to 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

270

Close to 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)

33.58%

Close to 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

3.77%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.30%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	68%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	60%	Above

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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	89%	73%	Above

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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	71%	Above

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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

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	62%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	55%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	44%	Above

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	79%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	76%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	58%	Above

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	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	62%	68%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	67%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	72%	66%	6 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	79%	80%	-1 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	81%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	80%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	89%	78%	11 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	70%	78%	-8 pp
2024/25 (final)	61%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	78%	-2 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	78%	77%	0 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	61%	81%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	79%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	78%	79%	-1 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)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	5.9%	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)	14.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.1%	16.2%	Close to average

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright