

Fiddlers Lane Community Primary School

Address: Fiddlers Lane, Irlam, Salford, Greater Manchester, M44 6QE

Unique reference number (URN): 149848

Inspection report: 7 July 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 

Achievement has improved considerably. Published outcomes in 2025 rose sharply from previous years. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics now sit close to national averages.

Pupils develop secure knowledge across many subjects. They become increasingly prepared for the next stage of education. Reading outcomes improved particularly positively. Disadvantaged pupils often achieve similarly to disadvantaged pupils nationally. Leaders' work on vocabulary, fluency and reading contributes to this improvement.

Children in early years are now better prepared for Year 1. Leaders have improved the curriculum, environment and staff expertise. These changes help children develop secure foundations for later learning. Published phonics outcomes dipped in 2025. However, current pupils are benefitting from a well taught programme and have made impressive gains in their phonic knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make progress because staff provide effective support and adjustments. Pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers. Pupils are now better prepared for the next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have made attendance a priority. They understand the barriers faced by many families and tackle them persistently. Attendance is a much improved picture for current pupils. Leaders work closely with families, the local authority and other agencies. Together, they are successfully tackling barriers to attendance. Leaders encourage pupils to attend through positive experiences. The school's approach to mornings helps pupils settle calmly. A breadth of enrichment opportunities makes pupils want to come to school. Persistent absence has impressively reduced for some groups and attendance continues to improve. However, there are a small number of pupils who still miss too much learning.

Behaviour has improved in recent years. Clear routines and expectations create a positive atmosphere. Pupils understand what staff expect and respond well. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and supportive. Staff help pupils regulate behaviour and remain focused on learning. Social times are calm and engaging. Pupils enjoy activities such as reading clubs, drawing, games and sports. Pupils described breaktimes as being better because clear rules help everyone enjoy playtimes. Suspensions have reduced sharply. Leaders provide more effective support for pupils with behavioural needs. Bullying is uncommon and staff address concerns promptly. As a result, pupils feel safe, behave well and increasingly thrive in school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have transformed the curriculum since the previous inspection. The curriculum reflects their ambition for pupils to become resilient, aspirational and confident learners.

Leaders' improvements are beginning to strengthen pupils' outcomes. This is particularly evident in pupils' phonics learning. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Leaders have strengthened subject sequencing to deliver this. Teacher subject knowledge is secure and they present learning in a logical order.

Reading drives learning across the school. Reading spaces are designed to encourage pupils to read widely. Pupils enjoy engaging with reading. Teachers use ambitious vocabulary and promote discussion across subjects. This helps pupils communicate with growing confidence.

Teachers adapt activities effectively so that all pupils can access the curriculum. Pupils with additional barriers to learning engage with lessons successfully alongside their peers. Calm routines help pupils focus and learn. However, some inconsistencies remain. A few pupils struggle to apply previously taught learning and make connections. Leaders recognise this and are refining the curriculum so that it is clear what teachers need to revisit to help pupils deepen their learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved early years significantly. They redesigned the curriculum, strengthened teaching and improved the learning environment. Children learn in a calm and purposeful setting. Positive relationships help children feel secure and ready to learn. Staff encourage children to communicate, explore and take risks.

Leaders prioritise language development. This addresses the low starting points of some children. Staff model language effectively and create opportunities for discussion throughout the day. Children benefit from improved phonics and early mathematics teaching. Support from external professionals has strengthened staff expertise. Children now build stronger foundations in reading and number.

Leaders have also raised expectations for what children can achieve. Staff establish productive routines quickly. They help children develop positive attitudes to learning. As a result, children engage purposefully and grow in confidence.

Outdoor provision supports physical development and independence. Children engage positively with activities and routines. Children make greater gains than in recent years, meaning more children are ready for Year 1.

However, some aspects of practice remain less consistent. On occasion, adults do not maximise learning during continuous provision. At times, children engage in activities without effective intervention to deepen learning. Nevertheless, leaders have secured rapid improvement. Children now receive a much brighter start to their education.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of their work. They understand the challenges many pupils and families face and respond thoughtfully. Regular inclusion meetings help leaders coordinate support and maintain a clear overview of pupils' needs. They evaluate the impact of support carefully and make timely adjustments when necessary.

Leaders identify pupils' needs accurately and ensure appropriate provision is in place. Staff adapt learning effectively so pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Well-targeted support helps pupils participate confidently and achieve success in lessons.

Leaders make effective use of advice from external specialists. Staff use this guidance to refine provision and meet pupils' needs more precisely. As a result, pupils with SEND take a full and active part in learning and the wider school life.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. This funding helps reduce barriers related to attendance, wellbeing and aspirations. It also enables pupils to access clubs, trips and enriching experiences. Leaders monitor participation closely. They provide lunchtime activities for pupils unable to attend after-school clubs.

Staff know vulnerable pupils well. Leaders work closely with families and community partners to provide coordinated support. This partnership helps pupils remain engaged in learning and school life.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked successfully to rebuild confidence in the school. Parents, carers, staff and pupils recognise the positive changes that leaders have secured. The school now plays a significant role within the local community.

Leaders have driven improvement following a period of instability. They accurately understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have established a clear vision centred on aspiration, inclusion and opportunity. Their actions have improved the curriculum, attendance systems, behaviour and early years provision.

Leaders and trustees maintain an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They use visits, reports and regular reviews to evaluate the impact of improvement work. This helps them identify priorities clearly and hold leaders to account for the quality of education and pupils' experiences.

Professional development remains a strength. Training and coaching help staff to contribute effectively to school improvement. Staff benefit from training and collaboration with other schools. They help monitor provision, support colleagues and drive improvements within their areas of responsibility.

Leaders also prioritise staff wellbeing. They consider workload carefully and create a positive culture. Staff are proud to work here and have full confidence in the school's leadership. Staff speak highly of the support leaders provide.

Leaders engage effectively with parents, external agencies and the wider community. They have strengthened links with local organisations and rebuilt confidence in the school.

Leaders have broadened pupils' experiences. Personal development sits at the heart of school life. A well-planned programme helps pupils learn about relationships, health, citizenship and online safety. Assemblies develop pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and equality. Leaders check pupils' understanding through discussion, pupil voice and quizzes.

Pupils develop leadership skills through meaningful responsibilities. School councillors have raised funds to improve resources. Head pupils welcome visitors, support events and represent the school positively. Pupils contribute to decisions about school life, including improvements to behaviour systems and the library. Leaders have also introduced new leadership opportunities, including an eco-council and safeguarding ambassadors.

Pupils enjoy a broad programme of enrichment. They participate in sports competitions, music workshops, performances and educational visits. Pupils meet authors, visit places of worship and read with residents in a local care home. They value residential visits and wider experiences that build independence and resilience. Lunchtimes offer a wide range of activities, including reading, drawing, games, computing and woodland activities. These opportunities help pupils discover new interests and talents.

Leaders track participation carefully. They analyse engagement across different groups and act when participation falls. Lunchtime clubs provide additional opportunities for pupils who cannot attend after-school activities. Leaders minimise financial barriers wherever possible so that pupils can access visits, clubs and experiences alongside their peers.

Pastoral support helps pupils build confidence and resilience. A calm start to the mornings helps pupils begin the day positively. Staff provide targeted support for pupils experiencing anxiety, emotional difficulties or significant change.

Career-related activities help raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils meet professionals, including scientists, nurses and pilots. Visitors help pupils understand future opportunities and broaden their ambitions. Overall, pupils develop confidence, responsibility, respect for others and a sense of belonging.

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

Pupils are part of a welcoming and increasingly ambitious school community. They embrace the school's vision of 'big dreams, bright futures'. Staff know pupils well and help them overcome barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel valued, included and ready to succeed. Many pupils have made impressive improvements to their attendance. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils trust staff and know that help is available when they need it.

Pupils enjoy learning and many attain well. Reading sits at the heart of school life. Pupils browse books in the refurbished library and outdoor reading shed. At lunchtime, pupils select books independently and eagerly discuss them with friends. These experiences help

pupils develop positive reading habits and a genuine enjoyment of reading. The school's curriculum helps pupils to develop resilience, confidence and aspiration for the future.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences beyond the classroom. They participate in clubs, sporting events, music performances and educational visits. Pupils visit places of cultural importance, such as a Hindu temple and meet visitors who broaden their understanding of the world. They speak enthusiastically about residential visits and leadership opportunities. School councillors, prefects and head pupils influence decisions and contribute to school improvement. Older pupils proudly lead tours for prospective parents, carers and visitors. These opportunities help pupils develop confidence, responsibility and ambition.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Social times are calm and purposeful. Pupils enjoy activities such as drawing, reading, woodland exploration and organised games. Pupils say behaviour has improved because expectations are now clearer and fairer. Bullying rarely disrupts school life and staff deal with concerns quickly. Pupils feel safe and learn how to recognise risks and seek support when needed.

Next steps

- Leaders should complete their curriculum refinements, ensuring that the key knowledge different year groups need to learn and remember is clearly defined. This will support staff to know what learning to revisit in order to deepen pupils' learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently maximise high-quality interactions and activities in the early years.
 - Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that effective attendance strategies continue to reduce persistent absence and improve attendance further for those pupils who miss school most often.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Prestolee Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Michael Tonge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Sargeant.

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

This inspection took place from 7 July to 8 July 2026.

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 senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the local governing board, the trust and spoke with representatives from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher : Krystyna Forster

Lead inspector:

Helen Friend, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

John Tomlinson, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Wilkins, 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 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

162

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)

55.86%

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

4.94%

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

19.14%

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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	66%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	66%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	52%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	62%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	52%	69%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

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)	7.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	5.5%	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)	26.1%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	23.6%	14.6%	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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