

The Grange School

Address: Latham Avenue, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5DX

Unique reference number (URN): 144617

Inspection report: 30 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.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a highly ambitious vision for how they want children to start their time at The Grange School. This vision is lived out by staff and children as they share vocabulary-rich interactions with kindness and respect. Parents and carers appreciate the warm and nurturing start their children encounter.

Recently, leaders have strengthened the curriculum in the early years. It is now engineered to make sure children are fully ready to move on to key stage 1. Leaders are relentless in checking the quality of provision. They make timely and highly effective changes when needed.

Leaders and staff use processes to quickly identify any children who may experience barriers to learning. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Teachers make astute and impactful adjustments to support these pupils. Consequently, children develop a broad vocabulary and demonstrate a clear understanding across the different areas of learning.

Early writing and number skills are successfully woven through the curriculum. This is coupled with leaders' relentless approach to reading. Children benefit from an expertly taught phonics programme in the Reception Year. This helps them to securely build a real love of reading.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Recently, leaders have improved the systems and structures in place to enhance how regularly pupils attend school. They now offer effective targeted support for pupils who may otherwise have barriers to how often they attend school. Staff work closely with pupils and their families to develop personalised supportive tools. As a result, the rates of attendance are improving, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has also reduced significantly. However, attendance rates remain below the national average.

Leaders and staff have very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Recently, they have developed and embedded highly effective routines. These systems allow pupils to fully focus on their learning. Pupils are courteous and polite to their friends, peers, staff and visitors. Pupils know that bullying and discrimination are not tolerated here. Leaders deal with any issues promptly. They make sure that careful adjustments are made to the systems for any pupils who need extra support in managing their emotions. Staff have established a number of impactful safe havens in school for pupils. These particularly benefit pupils with SEND and those who access the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the curriculum across all subjects and year groups since the previous inspection. Consequently, it is now well sequenced and allows appropriate opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge over time.

Teachers know their subjects well. They skilfully share their knowledge with pupils and provide the right amount of help for pupils who may need it. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers make meaningful adjustments to learning activities for these pupils.

Generally, teachers check what pupils know. Where misconceptions are identified, teachers typically help pupils to move on with their learning. However, this is not consistent across all year groups and subjects, which means there are sometimes missed opportunities to plug any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is not the case in the early years. Here, teachers robustly monitor children's development through the curriculum.

Leaders have systems in place to identify pupils who may need help to develop how well they read, write or use their number skills. They provide the support these pupils need to improve. Typically, this is successful.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have embedded systems that make sure that every pupil matters here. They have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that some pupils may encounter. Those who may find aspects of learning more challenging are identified effectively from nursery children through to Year 11 pupils. Generally, the help they receive is effective. This means pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have the tools they need to succeed in their learning.

Leaders work closely with external professionals to make sure that pupils known, or previously known, to social care get the right help at the right time. This is also true for the high number of young carers in school. As a result, these pupils thrive in their learning environment in school. Pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils. Staff know these pupils well. However, typically, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could in national examinations from their starting points.

Pupils who need the most support benefit from the positive learning environment in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have high expectations for these pupils. They make sure there are highly effective adjustments in place that allow pupils to access the curriculum. Occasionally, leaders make effective use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

In recent years, leadership has strengthened further. Leaders fully understand what is going well and what needs to improve. Generally, they have taken effective action to improve the school. For example, older pupils and staff appreciate the improvements in how well pupils

behave and how lessons are now delivered. However, leaders do not consistently share positive practices between the secondary and primary phases. As a result, some areas of the school may not be improved as effectively as they could be.

Trustees and governors share the vision and values of the leaders in the school. They are instrumental in driving improvements. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. At times, they do not check the information they are provided with as robustly as they could.

Staff love working here. They share leaders' high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They hold pupils' best interests close to their hearts. Staff rightly say that leaders are mindful of their workload and wellbeing. They know it is a priority and they appreciate this. Staff value the professional training they receive. They say this helps them to enhance their skills.

Recently, leaders have reinvigorated how they engage parents and carers. They use innovative strategies to support families. For example, many more parents now attend parents' evenings. Most parents feel well supported by staff to help their child succeed. Leaders have also broadened the scope of engagement with the wider community through a range of charitable projects and activities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have embedded a personal development and wellbeing programme that builds from Nursery to Year 11. Pupils are taught how to develop healthy relationships from the start of their journey at this school. They have an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe both online and in the local community. Leaders engage parents and carers in this work by providing well-attended workshops and information sessions.

Leaders make sure that pupils understand the wider world beyond the local area. Pupils build their knowledge of fundamental British values and characteristics protected by law. They understand how they can make a positive contribution to society. Leaders make careful adjustments to the curriculum for pupils who may need it. For example, pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive content in an adapted form. All pupils build their understanding of tolerance and acceptance.

Pastoral support is effective. The skilled team works with pupils and their families to provide tailored support to get them back on track if they need it. This offer includes counselling, safe spaces in school and help from a variety of external professionals.

Leaders have implemented appropriate career support. Pupils in key stage 1 begin to experience visits to local employers. This, coupled with personalised careers guidance, develops as pupils move through to key stage 4. Pupils experience mock interviews and the world of work through bespoke work experience placements in Year 10. As a result, most pupils now move on to appropriate education, training or employment when they leave school at the end of Year 11.

Staff make sure there are activities and experiences on offer for everyone. There are performing arts clubs, sporting clubs and craft clubs for pupils who appreciate a creative, quiet space. Pupils know they can develop their identity at this school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not attain as well as they should in national examinations at the end of key stage 4. Generally, they do not achieve as well as their peers nationally across most subjects. This is because pupils have gaps in their knowledge by the time they reach the end of Year 11. Historically, teachers did not routinely provide the right remedies to help pupils close these gaps. This limits how well prepared they are for the next stage of education, employment or training. However, disadvantaged pupils did attain in line with the national average last year. Pupils attending the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Typically, there are improvements across year groups and subjects in the work that pupils produce now. This is due to the improvements that have been made to the quality of teaching, particularly in younger years. It is too soon to see the impact of leaders' recent focus on the development of pupils' reading, writing and number skills across the curriculum.

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

The Grange Academy is the beating heart of the community. Pupils are happy here. This is true from Nursery to Year 11. Pupils relish the positive relationships they have with nurturing staff and the respectful friendships they enjoy. Staff care deeply for pupils and pupils feel this. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, both in school and in the wider world. This extends to online safety.

Pupils try hard to reach leaders' high expectations for how they should behave. They understand the reasons behind the routines and rules in school. This means that lessons are settled spaces where pupils can focus without disruption. Pupils show dedication to their learning. Increasingly, they display positive learning habits and independence when they tackle trickier work. Typically, pupils attend school regularly.

Bullying and discrimination are rare here. Pupils know that they can tell any member of staff if they experience unpleasant comments. They like the fact that staff deal with any incidents quickly and robustly. Consequently, pupils fully understand the consequences of discrimination and unkindness of any type. Everyone is welcome here.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in line with their starting points. This is true in national examinations at the end of key stage 4 and in the work they produce. This is because the improvements to the quality of teaching have not had time to embed. As a result, gaps in pupils' learning persist.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities on offer in school. For example, older pupils enjoy their role as reading buddies. They work with pupils in the primary classes to foster a love of reading. This helps pupils to develop confidence and resilience. Many pupils benefit from the trips on offer. For instance, pupils visit the zoo and experience a variety of different faiths during visits to places of worship. A range of clubs, such as judo, board games clubs and jewellery design support pupils to find their niche.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen the systems in place to analyse and improve the rates of attendance so that pupils continue to attend school regularly.
 - Leaders should continue to improve how well teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide effective support so that all pupils can achieve their potential in national examinations.
 - Leaders should continue to work collaboratively between primary and secondary phases to sharpen the systems they have in place to evaluate the impact of their actions. They should use this information to further strengthen improvements across all areas of the school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Wade Deacon 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), Gary Kelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Fowler.

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, senior leaders, the CEO, trustees, and members of the local governing committee, including the chair, 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 school has undergone considerable leadership changes since the previous inspection. A new executive principal was appointed in April 2024. The chair of governors was appointed in December 2025.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions.

Lead inspector:

Helen Fowler, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Victoria Atherton, Ofsted Inspector

Timothy Gartside, Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Sexton, Ofsted Inspector

Samantha Birchall, Ofsted Inspector

Lise Houldsworth, 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

1,173

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,320

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

54.98%

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: 28.9%

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

5.63%

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

21.06%

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

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)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Key stage 2

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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	51%	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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
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	73%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	71%	Close to average

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	65%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	59%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	73%	Below

Key stage 4

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)	23.7%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.6%	45.3%	Below

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)	36.4	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	33.5	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	35.1	46.3	Below

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)	-0.84	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.73	-0.03	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.

Key stage 2

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	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	43%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	44%	Close to average

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	72%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	70%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	62%	60%	Close to average

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	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average

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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average

Key stage 4

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)	16.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	21.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	17.7%	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)	30.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	29.6	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.0	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)	-1.18	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	-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 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	48%	68%	-19 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	43%	69%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-22 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	72%	80%	-7 pp
2024/25 (final)	70%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	80%	6 pp
2022/23 (final)	62%	78%	-16 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	64%	78%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	77%	-22 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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	79%	-12 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp

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)	16.7%	53.1%	-36.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	21.9%	53.1%	-31.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.7%	52.4%	-34.7 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)	30.6	50.4	-19.8
2023/24 (final)	29.6	50.0	-20.4

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	31.0	50.3	-19.3

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)	-1.18	0.16	-1.34
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	0.17	-0.91

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)	87%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	Average

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)	10.8%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.6%	9.0%	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)	33.4%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.8%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.4%	26.5%	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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