

Mab's Cross Primary School

Address: Standishgate, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 1XL

Unique reference number (URN): 106405

Inspection report: 31 March 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a caring and stimulating environment where pupils enjoy learning and attend regularly. As a consequence, overall attendance is higher than the average for schools nationally. Leaders carefully check pupils' absences. They work productively with families to reduce the barriers that might prevent some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, from being in class each day. All staff build positive relationships with pupils. Leaders work closely with the local authority to support high levels of attendance for all pupils.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They have established clear rules and routines and a well-understood approach to managing behaviour. Staff follow this consistently well. The learning environment is calm. All pupils know what is expected of them. They are polite, courteous and kind to each other. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are keen to learn. Most pupils benefit from the support that teachers give them so that they can learn more. Pupils enjoy playing together and know that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, whether online or offline, staff will deal with it quickly.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children make a strong start to their education when they join the early years. The curriculum prioritises developing children's language skills and building their vocabulary. This is especially effective for those children who speak English as an additional language. Staff's frequent, skilful interactions with children are highly effective. They help children to listen carefully and communicate clearly.

The curriculum, including the phonics programme, is carefully designed and delivered by highly trained staff. Children gain the knowledge that they need to become successful early readers, writers and mathematicians. Phonics is taught consistently well. Children learn enthusiastically because of the high-quality and carefully designed curriculum opportunities. This includes well-resourced rucksacks, which children can use to learn about maps and explore nature. Activities are enriched by high-quality reading books that children are keen to read independently or with staff. When needed, activities are adapted so that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children, can thrive. Children's personal, social, and emotional development is prioritised, which helps them to care for each other and look after themselves with growing independence. Children are well prepared for their move into Year 1. Partnerships with parents and carers are well established.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders use well-established systems to carefully identify any additional needs that pupils have. They provide high-quality support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know pupils well and understand any barriers they may face to their wellbeing and learning. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for so they are ready to learn. Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained to support

pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Staff make changes to activities so that all pupils can learn well and be fully involved in school life. Staff act on professional advice and work closely with parents and carers to strengthen the support they give to pupils. Leaders monitor pupils' support closely to ensure it has a positive impact and helps pupils to thrive.

Leaders use additional funding effectively to support inclusive practice in the school. In the early years, extra resources help all children communicate well with staff and peers. Older pupils benefit from help to fill any gaps in their learning. Funding is also used so that all pupils can access the wide range of additional activities, including clubs and visits that the school organises. Leaders and governors routinely evaluate the impact of their work so that it makes a positive difference to all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The extensive programme that leaders offer to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing helps pupils to become kind, respectful, independent and confident. The school's curriculums for personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education are well designed and delivered effectively. They help pupils to learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including when online, in age-appropriate ways. Lessons are enriched by visits and visitors, such as from the local dentist, police officers and nurses. Learning also covers water and rail safety, especially relevant to the location of the school.

Leaders have planned a programme of wider opportunities for pupils to experience. These strengthen pupils' understanding of curriculum topics, such as a visit to the nearby River Douglas to support a geography topic. Pupils in Year 6 build their economic understanding through an enterprise activity to raise funds for a trip. Visitors from the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics encourage pupils to consider future careers and aspirations.

Leaders meticulously monitor all pupils' attendance at the varied and extensive clubs that are on offer and ensure that they benefit pupils who most need them. Leaders review and adapt the offer to reflect pupils' interests. Levels of participation are high.

All pupils are encouraged to represent the school at a sporting or curriculum competition. This includes events that are designed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as boccia, or those aimed at encouraging all to join in. Pupils benefit from a highly effective pastoral system. They are well prepared for their next stage of development and for their future lives in modern-day Britain.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Typically, pupils develop secure subject knowledge across most of the curriculum. Most pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. For example, they use subject-specific words with understanding to explain essential concepts. Pupils can apply their previous learning to produce high-quality work. Pupils become confident, skilful mathematicians. In

the early years and key stage 1, pupils develop an effective grasp of phonics. This sets them up well to become confident and fluent readers. However, some pupils have weaknesses in their handwriting skills and spelling knowledge. This hampers their ability to write accurately in English lessons and across the curriculum.

Over time, Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics has generally been similar to national averages. This includes for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The ambitious curriculum enables pupils to build step by step on what they already know. It prioritises pupils' learning in writing, reading and mathematics. This ensures that pupils have the key knowledge to access their learning across other curriculum subjects.

Typically, teachers ensure that children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 gain the fundamental skills needed to write and spell correctly. However, there is occasionally some variability in how well staff ensure that pupils continue to build on these skills, such as correct letter formation, through key stage 2.

Leaders ensure that staff have the subject knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum well. Staff provide pupils with helpful support to catch up with their learning when needed. In the main, teachers ensure that pupils extend their vocabulary. They use assessment strategies effectively and usually correct pupils' misconceptions when they occur. Staff adapt their teaching so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can keep pace with the intended learning.

Leaders carefully check the impact of the curriculum on pupils. They know what is working well and what changes need to be made. This helps the quality of teaching to continue to improve.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors ensure that the school's work makes a positive difference to all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and its areas for further improvement. Over time, their work has led to sustained improvements in pupils' behaviour and their personal development and wellbeing. Leaders ensure that all pupils develop a sense of belonging. Leaders use their well-established links with other schools and the local authority to develop staff's expertise. Staff benefit from the professional learning and guidance that leaders provide. Teamwork between staff is well established. Staff appreciate the care and consideration that is given to their workload and wellbeing.

Governors are knowledgeable and carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They have a thorough understanding of the school. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Leaders and governors take decisions that are in the best interests of the pupils. They use resources wisely.

Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers and, when needed, provide effective support and guidance.

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

Pupils are proud to belong to this school that aims to bring out the best in everyone. Staff give pupils and their families a warm welcome each morning. Pupils settle quickly because they feel safe, cared for and are keen to learn. Daily routines are well established. Pupils behave well because of the clear high expectations that leaders and staff have.

All pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum. It is well organised so that pupils can learn and remember more over time. This prepares most pupils well for the next stages of their education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to overcome any barriers to learning or wellbeing that they face. This means that they progress smoothly through the curriculum.

Pupils attend school regularly. They gain new skills from the broad range of opportunities that leaders plan for each year group. Educational visits, such as river studies and trips to the local allotments enrich classroom learning. Pupils' impressive artwork is celebrated around school. This includes work from a competition organised by the National Gallery. All pupils attend a wide variety of clubs, such as judo, 'climate detectives' and baking. All pupils are encouraged to learn to play a musical instrument and enjoy performing in assembly.

Pupils play well together. They treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils know that staff will deal with any bullying if it arises. Leaders provide pupils with leadership roles, which include being play leaders and class ambassadors. The school council has worked on projects that have led to positive changes in the community, including through improved signage and hedge planting. This work contributes to pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that spelling and handwriting are consistently taught well in key stage 2 so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Gregg Leech.

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, a representative of the local authority and a school improvement partner who supports the school.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Andrea Poole

Lead inspector:

Kathryn Pym, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Linda Griffiths, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Stevens, Ofsted Inspector

Joanna Atherton, 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 31 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

475

Well above 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

490

Well above 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)

21.26%

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

1.89%

Below 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

8.42%

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 | 66% | 61% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 57% | 62% | Close to average |
| 2023/24 (final) | 71% | 61% | Above |
| 2022/23 (final) | 69% | 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 | 76% | 74% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 66% | 75% | Below |

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | 84% | 74% | Above |
| 2022/23 (final) | 79% | 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 | 85% | 72% | Above |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 88% | 72% | Above |
| 2023/24 (final) | 83% | 72% | Above |
| 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 | 76% | 73% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 69% | 74% | Close to average |
| 2023/24 (final) | 83% | 73% | Above |
| 2022/23 (final) | 76% | 73% | Close to average |

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 | 48% | 46% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 40% | 47% | Close to average |
| 2023/24 (final) | 50% | 46% | Close to average |
| 2022/23 (final) | 59% | 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 | 64% | 62% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 48% | 63% | Below |
| 2023/24 (final) | 71% | 62% | Close to average |
| 2022/23 (final) | 82% | 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 | 79% | 59% | Above |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 80% | 59% | Above |
| 2023/24 (final) | 64% | 58% | Close to average |

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 88% | 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 | 57% | 60% | Close to average |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 52% | 61% | Close to average |
| 2023/24 (final) | 57% | 59% | Close to average |
| 2022/23 (final) | 65% | 59% | 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 |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 40% | 69% | -29 pp |
| 2023/24 (final) | 50% | 67% | -17 pp |
| 2022/23 (final) | 59% | 66% | -8 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 | 64% | 80% | -15 pp |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 48% | 81% | -33 pp |
| 2023/24 (final) | 71% | 80% | -8 pp |
| 2022/23 (final) | 82% | 78% | 4 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 | 79% | 78% | 1 pp |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 80% | 78% | 2 pp |
| 2023/24 (final) | 64% | 78% | -13 pp |
| 2022/23 (final) | 88% | 77% | 11 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 | 57% | 80% | -23 pp |
| 2024/25 (revised) | 52% | 81% | -29 pp |
| 2023/24 (final) | 57% | 79% | -22 pp |
| 2022/23 (final) | 65% | 79% | -14 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 (2 term) | 3.9% | 5.2% | Below |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 4.7% | 5.5% | Below |
| 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 (2 term) | 11.2% | 13.3% | Close to average |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 10.5% | 14.6% | Below |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 15.0% | 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.

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