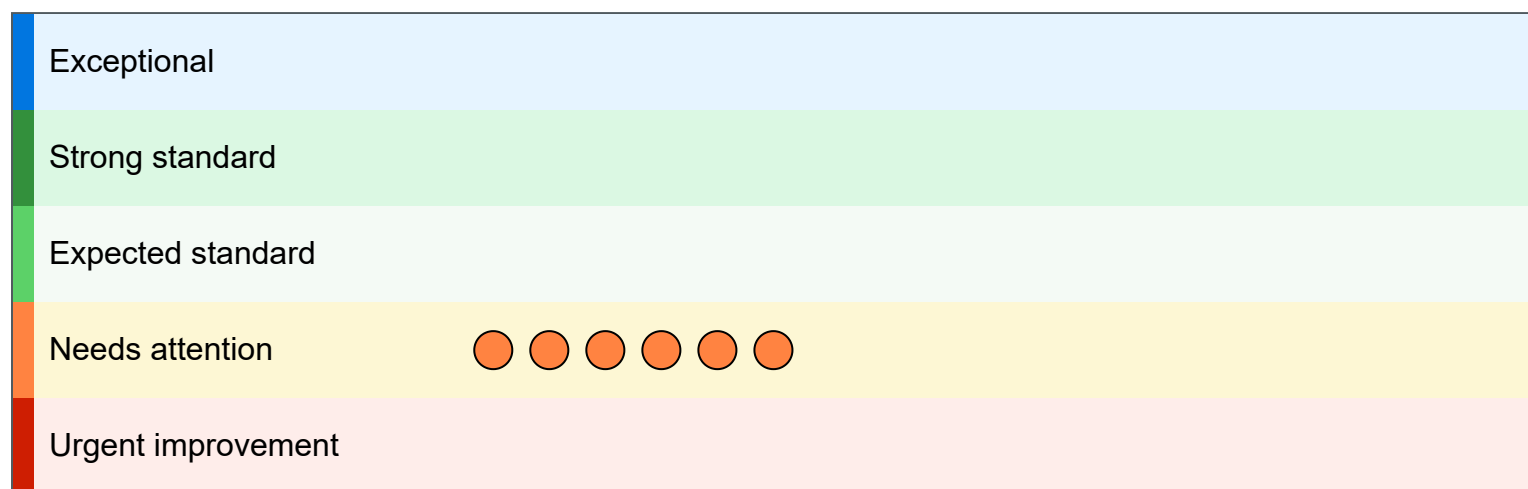


# Werneth School

**Address:** Harrytown, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 3BX

**Unique reference number (URN):** 148327

## Inspection report: 3 February 2026



### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils have underachieved. Compared to most national benchmarks, their attainment in national examinations has been too low. Some recent pockets of improvement have emerged. For example, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been similar to that of their peers nationally. In addition, current pupils are learning the curriculum more readily than in the past. However, this is not a consistent picture across the school.

New strategies for addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge, especially in English and mathematics, are beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders have a firm grasp of what must be done to raise achievement at key stage 4. Even so, the school's work to develop key stage 3 pupils' literacy and numeracy skills remains in its infancy.

On the whole, pupils leaving this school move on to suitable next steps in ever-growing proportions. However, for some, their readiness is limited by gaps in their knowledge or skills that have not successfully closed.

### Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' rates of attendance remain too low. Leaders have renewed their efforts to help pupils attend school more frequently. There are signs of improvements for some groups of pupils. Others, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, still miss school too often. Work to support these pupils is not as effective as it should be because leaders have not analysed and responded to the reasons for their absences well enough.

In recent years, turbulence in staffing and frequent changes of leadership led to widely disrupted behaviour across the school. This is no longer the case. Leaders have successfully established a more positive culture in the school. On the whole, pupils' conduct in lessons has markedly improved. They respond appropriately to staff instructions. Corridors are generally calm, and pupils typically treat each other well. This has contributed to a positive and respectful atmosphere where learning is not usually disrupted. Leaders' high expectations, alongside the school's consistent routines, provide staff with the support they need to address any poor behaviour. For example, this helps staff to deal with incidents of bullying, discrimination and derogatory language swiftly. This gives pupils renewed confidence in reporting such incidents.

The number of suspensions, although still high, has sharply reduced in each of the last 3 years.

### Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Since the last inspection, leaders' adoption of a new curriculum has brought renewed certainty about what pupils should learn and when. Leaders have begun to tackle weaknesses in how well this curriculum is taught. However, some of these recent efforts have not fully addressed the inconsistent quality of teaching across school. For example,

although teachers are well informed about pupils' starting points and any additional needs that they may have, this information is not routinely well used to adapt learning effectively.

Teachers, including non-specialists, have secure knowledge of their subjects. However, some teachers do not use effective checks on pupils' understanding to inform their teaching. This leads to missed opportunities to correct pupils' misconceptions or to fill in missing knowledge. At times, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply and deepen their understanding. Leaders have rightly prioritised improvements that are likely to make a difference to pupils' learning. However, it is too soon to see a consistent impact of these.

Leaders have strengthened their support for pupils to secure their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who struggle the most with reading benefit from specialist intervention, which helps them to catch up quickly. That said, this approach is not reinforced as effectively as it could be by subject teachers. This slows the pace at which gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed.

## **Inclusion**

**Needs attention** ●

Leaders have begun to renew their systems for identifying barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. This has helped to increase teachers' understanding about the different special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have. However, leaders' actions to improve the quality of support for pupils with SEND are not well developed. Staff training is ongoing. At present, the experiences of pupils with SEND vary too much from one classroom to the next.

Leaders have set out a well-intentioned strategy for using additional funding. This strategy appropriately reflects the needs of the school's high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. However, some of the school's approaches to supporting these pupils are too broad. This makes it difficult for school and trust leaders to know which approaches are successfully reducing barriers for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have a clear vision for inclusive practices to be the norm across classrooms. For some groups of pupils, this vision has been realised. For example, pupils known to social care benefit from comprehensive plans and leaders' effective partnerships with external agencies. In addition, leaders have considerably reduced the number of pupils who are educated outside of mainstream lessons. Alternative provision is used sparingly, appropriately and in pupils' best interests.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Needs attention** ●

Until recently, the trust did not support this school as well as it should. Uncertainty about the school's future meant that leaders could not bring about much-needed improvements quickly. This has begun to change. The school is now at a turning point in its development. Governance and leadership have been strengthened at all levels. Staffing has been stabilised. Trustees meet their statutory duties to the school.

Leaders, governors and the trust have a greater shared vision of school improvement than in the past. Even so, some variability in the effectiveness of leadership persists. In areas where leaders have focused their attention for longer, such as addressing poor behaviour,

there has been a substantial turnaround. Other developments, such as leaders' strategies to improve pupils' attendance, remain imprecise. Furthermore, many changes that leaders have made are too recent to have a proven impact. Despite leaders' sound intentions, this means that pupils' experiences at school, including those of vulnerable pupil groups, are still uneven.

Leaders have put in place a suitable professional learning programme for staff. This is helping to build expertise across the school. Although the impact on pupils' learning is inconsistent, leaders have identified the right priorities to improve.

Staff describe the school as a transformed place to work. Despite a period of much upheaval, they feel better supported by leaders. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders have given to workload, for instance by adapting policies about giving feedback on pupils' work.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Needs attention** 

Leaders have designed a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. However, it is not implemented as effectively as it needs to be. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been recently strengthened. Despite this, some pupils do not currently benefit from this curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 11 miss some of their PSHE learning to focus on examination revision. At times, they have difficulty remembering important information that they learned in Year 10. Leaders are working to improve this. However, at present, some older pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern society as they should be.

Younger pupils benefit from the school's personal development programme to a greater degree. For instance, learning about the fundamental British values of mutual respect and tolerance is helping pupils to treat each other positively. The impact of this can be seen through decreasing incidents of bullying and derogatory language.

Leaders take careful account of any concerns in the local area and address these through a programme of assemblies. This helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Staff sensitively adapt this information to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Many pupils enjoy a wide variety of enrichment activities, such as taking part in the school production or joining one of the after-school clubs. For these pupils, such opportunities help them to develop new skills and interests. That said, pupils' participation in these activities wanes in the older year groups. Leaders are adapting their offer to ensure that there is something for everyone.

The school provides a suitable programme of careers information and guidance. Vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils benefit from additional mentoring. These pupils are confident in the support that they receive. More and more pupils successfully progress to further education, employment or training.

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

Over the last 3 years, pupils have experienced a turbulent time at this school. Instabilities in staffing and leadership meant that, until recently, pupils did not benefit from the high-quality education that they deserve. During that time, some parents and carers rightly raised concerns over their children's experiences at the school.

More recently, things have changed for the better. Pupils' conduct and attendance are improving. Lessons and corridors are calm. Most pupils behave well and act respectfully towards each other. They understand that the school's high expectations have helped them to feel happier and safer at school than in the past. This is helping many pupils to enjoy their learning more and more, profiting from a greater range of experiences. They increasingly feel like they belong. On the whole, pupils forge positive relationships with staff. When pupils report problems such as bullying or derogatory language, staff typically deal with these instances well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have a renewed confidence in staff to help and support them sensitively. They are benefiting from the school's work to prioritise inclusion. Even so, the impact of the support that pupils with SEND receive in lessons is still too variable. At times, barriers to learning are not reduced well enough. Some pupils with SEND do not attend school often enough.

Improvements to the school's curriculum mean that it is now well ordered and ambitious. However, pupils' learning across the curriculum is still uneven because of inconsistencies in how well it is taught. Leaders have put appropriate plans in place to help pupils to fill in any gaps in their learning. However, these plans have not had enough time to be fully successful. As such, pupils' typical achievement in national examinations remains well below the national average. This limits their readiness for what comes next.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well across all subjects and year groups so that pupils learn and achieve well.
  - Leaders should ensure that staff are fully equipped with the information and expertise they need to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
  - Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment techniques effectively in order to identify and address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.
  - Leaders should sharpen their analysis of attendance strategies to ensure that the most effective approaches are used for groups of pupils with varying needs so that they attend regularly.
  - Leaders should ensure that planned improvements to the delivery of the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum enable all pupils to be better prepared to take their place in modern society.
  - The trust should ensure that the school receives the support it needs in order to continue the positive developments that have begun.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Education Learning 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), Vanessa McManus, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen White.

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and the chair and vice-chair of the trust board. He also met with the CEO of the trust and a representative of the local authority.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 3 registered and 3 unregistered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.

The school has undergone significant changes in leadership since its last full inspection. The acting headteacher has been in post since November 2024. The CEO of the trust has been in post since September 2025.

Acting Headteacher: Rhiannon Chantler

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### Lead inspector:

Ben Hill, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Tracey Greenough, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Lindsay Brindley, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's 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 3 February 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**991**

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

**1,250**

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: 1,153

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**38.14%**

Above average

### What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

**3.94%**

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: 3.09%

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**20.28%**

Well above average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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)**

**No resourced provision**

### **What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## **All pupils' performance**

**English and maths GCSE**

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (provisional)</b>	25.4%	45.2%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	33.2%	45.9%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	25.5%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (provisional)</b>	36.7	45.9	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	39.5	45.9	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35.9	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	-0.45	-0.03	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	-0.55	-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.

## 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 (provisional)	14.6%	25.6%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	10.5%	25.2%	Below

## 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 (provisional)	29.5	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	26.9	35.0	Below

## 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)	-0.86	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.16	-0.57	Below

## 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' 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
<b>2024/25 (provisional)</b>	14.6%	52.8%	-38.2 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	19.0%	53.1%	-34.1 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	10.5%	52.4%	-41.9 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
<b>2024/25 (provisional)</b>	29.5	50.3	-20.8
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	31.9	50.0	-18.1
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	26.9	50.3	-23.4

### 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)	-0.86	0.16	-1.03
2022/23 (final)	-1.16	0.17	-1.32

## 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 (provisional)	81%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Below

## 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)	15.3%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.5%	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 (2 term)	41.0%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	35.8%	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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