

Weaverham High School

Address: Lime Avenue, Weaverham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 3HT

Unique reference number (URN): 149614

Inspection report: 24 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

A commitment to inclusion lies at the heart of leaders' work. Inclusive practices are embedded across the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Leaders have effective systems for identifying and assessing pupils' needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff are well trained. They reduce barriers to learning through carefully planned personalised approaches. Where necessary, they work in close partnership with external agencies to do this. For example, they work closely with the local authority's virtual school to support pupils who are known or previously known to children's social care.

Support for pupils who face challenges relating to their wellbeing is high quality. Leaders have introduced a number of provisions, such as the 'Wren Room', to provide bespoke and impactful support. Leaders have highly effective systems for evaluating the impact of their work on groups and individual pupils. When necessary, they adapt their approaches to cater for pupils' changing needs.

Staff maintain regular oversight of the small number of pupils who attend external alternative provision. They ensure that these pupils continue to feel a sense of belonging to the school. Leaders use additional funding such as the pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully to reduce the barriers that pupils may face.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have carefully designed a personal development programme that prepares pupils for a rapidly changing world. Pupils learn a deep body of knowledge through the school's 'life curriculum'. This equips pupils with an excellent understanding of healthy relationships, including the notion of consent. Pupils demonstrate a clear knowledge of online risks, including those that are becoming more prevalent, such as the different types of untruth on social media.

Leaders recognise that the school's population does not fully reflect the diversity of modern Britain. They have deliberately planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the beauty of diversity through subject curriculums and the wider personal development offer. Pupils embrace fundamental British values. For example, they clearly understand right from wrong. Pupils are reflective, tolerant and principled.

The personal development programme supports disadvantaged pupils very well. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who consistently participate in the vibrant and extensive range of clubs has increased significantly in recent years. Staff go to great lengths to remove barriers to participation for individuals and groups of pupils, such as young carers and disadvantaged pupils.

The programme of careers education is part of the lifeblood of the school. Every pupil has a careers plan that is adapted as they advance through the school. The programme is

carefully tailored to local, national and global changes in the labour market. For example, pupils have recently taken part in workshops linked to artificial intelligence and robotics.

Leaders develop pupils' character very well. Through opportunities such as the Year 7 residential trip, pupils develop qualities such as initiative and resilience. Pupils who face challenges in relation to their wellbeing are supported through the school's pastoral systems. There is a remarkable range of sporting, cultural and artistic opportunities that nurture pupils' talents.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Generally, pupils achieve well. This is reflected in the results of national examinations at the end of key stage 4, which are typically similar to or above national averages. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the performance of disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, the achievement of pupils who have joined the school with lower attainment has been more variable.

Throughout the school, pupils typically learn the content of subject curriculums well. Pupils are able to recall key learning confidently. The quality of their work generally reflects secure learning over time. Pupils are well prepared for life after Weaverham, and most pupils advance to appropriate destinations that align with their interests and aspirations.

Pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge are given high-quality and timely support. This improves the accuracy and fluency of their reading, which unlocks further learning across the curriculum. Leaders also ensure that pupils with gaps in their foundational knowledge of mathematics receive help.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance across the school has been close to average for the past 2 years. However, attendance for disadvantaged pupils fell last year and was lower than the national average for that group. To fix this, leaders have improved how they track attendance. They check absences very closely and provide better support to pupils who are often missing, focusing on the reasons why they are not in school. As a result, attendance for disadvantaged pupils has risen steadily this year. Some pupils, including those in the 'Wren Room', have made even bigger improvements in their attendance.

Pupils typically behave very well. They follow the school's routines calmly. Pupils conform to leaders' expectation of them being 'safe, ready and respectful'. Low-level disruption in lessons is very rare, as is the use of discriminatory language and bullying. The school's culture is based on warm and respectful relationships. Pupils feel seen and heard. They know that they matter. Staff deal effectively with rare behaviour issues using leaders' agreed systems. Staff make appropriate adaptations, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to help all pupils live up to the school's expectations.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They know which aspects are stronger and are working on the areas that need it. Curriculum leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and well planned.

Teachers generally deliver the curriculum well. They have secure knowledge of pupils' needs and the content that they teach. They typically explain new content well and provide pupils with opportunities to revisit and build upon prior learning.

Teachers use some aspects of assessment well to help pupils' learning. For example, they check pupils' learning of a unit or topic to identify what pupils know and where there are gaps in their knowledge. However, the use of assessment during lessons is inconsistent. At times, teachers do not use activities that help them work out how well pupils understand new content. This makes it difficult for them to adapt their teaching for pupils who need it, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. On occasion, this limits the learning of some pupils, particularly those with low prior attainment.

Pupils with the biggest gaps in their learning receive appropriate support. The provision for pupils who are unable to read accurately or fluently is a notable strength.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance share a clear understanding of the school's context. They are ambitious for pupils and aim to instil an 'ethic of excellence' that will unlock each pupil's unique potential. Leaders have established an open and transparent culture. Those responsible for governance challenge leaders appropriately on important matters such as attendance, safeguarding and pupils' achievement. They ensure that the school meets its statutory duties.

Leaders are committed to ethical leadership. They prioritise support for potentially vulnerable pupils, such as those known or previously known to children's social care. Leaders' commitment to inclusion is tangible and underpins all the decisions that they make.

Leaders and those responsible for governance know the school well. They quickly spot when an area falls below their expectations and address any issues quickly and effectively. They use resources astutely to prioritise improvements in the areas that will benefit pupils most, such as ensuring access to different aspects of the personal development offer.

Staff benefit from a programme of professional learning based on the best available evidence. This has helped bring about many improvements across the school, such as the introduction of high-quality subject curriculums. It has also helped to improve teaching and pupils' examination results in several subjects that underperformed in the past.

Leaders engage well with staff, pupils, parents and carers. They systematically capture their views on the school and take appropriate action to address issues that are raised, such as those relating to staff workload and wellbeing.

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

Pupils experience an ambitious and inclusive school, which aims for them to be the best version of themselves. Pupils feel safe and respected. They are known as individuals and benefit from high-quality pastoral support and care. Pupils enjoy warm and respectful relationships with staff and their peers. Pupils behave well and typically attend regularly. Lessons are focused on learning and free from disruption. Staff skilfully address any rare incidents of unkind or discriminatory behaviour.

Staff pay particular attention to pupils who may face additional barriers to achievement, such as disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that these pupils feel connected to the school and ambitious for themselves. Pupils who experience challenges in relation to their wellbeing receive personalised and impactful support.

Pupils are committed to their studies. They enjoy learning and generally achieve well in national examinations at the end of Year 11. This reflects leaders' commitment to instilling pupils with an 'ethic of excellence'.

Pupils appreciate the extensive and exciting range of opportunities to support their personal development. Many pupils fulfil leadership roles, such as ethos leaders who contribute to the school's aspirational culture. Pupils' character is developed through many planned opportunities, including participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and foreign expeditions. Most pupils attend some of the many extra-curricular clubs on offer, which develop their talents and interests.

The school's programme of careers education gets pupils to consider their next steps from Year 7. It encourages them to think deeply about their own interests and aspirations in relation to the changing job market. This ensures that pupils are very well prepared for life after Weaverham High School.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve professional learning for staff to ensure that the school curriculum is consistently taught well.
 - Leaders should further develop the ways that teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons so they can make changes to teaching that remove barriers to the achievement of all pupils and especially those with low prior attainment.
 - Leaders should embed recent improvements to the management of attendance to further increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and others who face barriers to regular attendance.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Sandstone 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), Jason Lowe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Taylor.

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 senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with those responsible for governance, including the chair of trustees and members of the school's governing body, and the CEO.

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 alternative provisions.

The school educates a small number of pupils at the 'Wren Room'. This provision is located within Weaverham Community Centre, which is a very short distance from the school.

Headteacher: Clare Morgan

Lead inspector:

Will Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sheldon Logue, Ofsted Inspector

Katy Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Michael Gun-Why, Ofsted Inspector

David Bell, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,160

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

1,175

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)

18.97%

Below 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

3.36%

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

14.48%

Close to 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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	56.6%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	61.6%	45.9%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23		45.3%	

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 (revised)	50.6	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52.9	45.9	Above
2022/23		46.3	

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)	0.17	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23		-0.03	

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 (revised)	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23		25.2%	

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 (revised)	34.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23		35.0	

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)	-0.64	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23		-0.57	

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
2024/25 (revised)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp
2022/23		52.4%	

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 (revised)	34.5	50.4	-15.9
2023/24 (final)	35.2	50.0	-14.9
2022/23		50.3	

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)	-0.64	0.16	-0.80
2022/23		0.17	

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
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	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 (2 term)	7.7%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.1%	8.9%	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)	18.8%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	21.7%	25.6%	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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