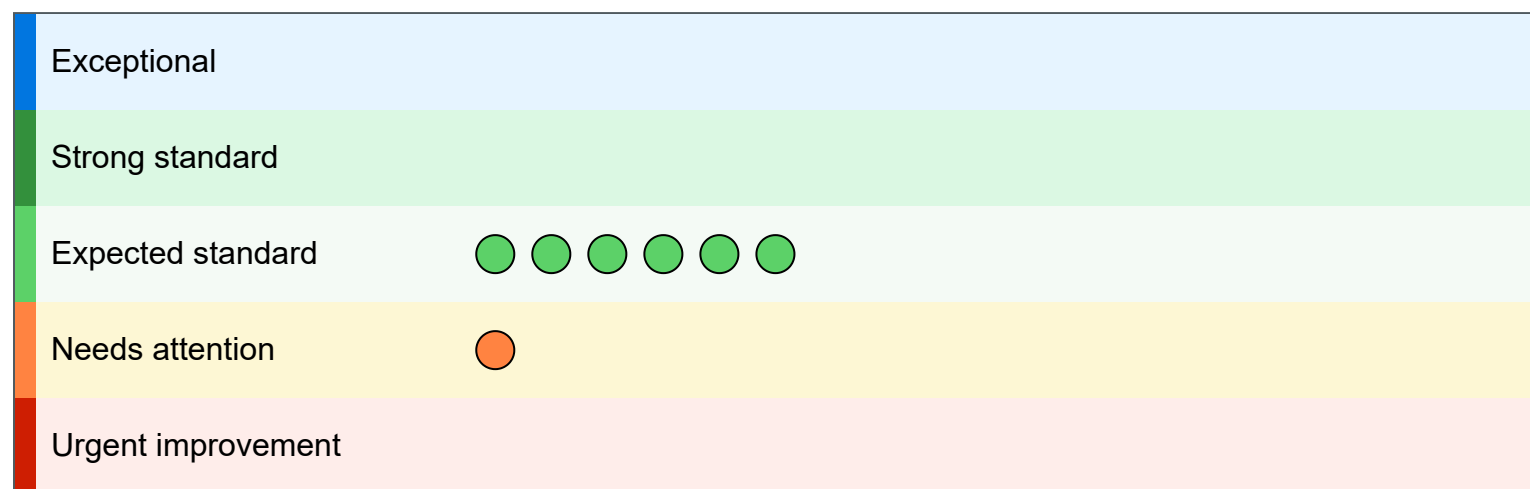


Alder Grange School

Address: Calder Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8HW

Unique reference number (URN): 119722

Inspection report: 10 March 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance is effective. They monitor attendance patterns closely and take proactive action to reduce barriers when needed. As a result, overall attendance is in line with national figures and absence is reducing. When individual pupils or groups need extra support, leaders put appropriate plans in place and follow these up carefully. Staff understand their roles in promoting good attendance. Pupils know that being in school every day matters. This consistent approach helps more pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, to attend regularly.

Leaders have created a generally calm, orderly and respectful environment. Most staff use clear routines and apply consequences fairly. They reinforce key expectations by celebrating pupils being 'ready, respectful and responsible'. This recognition is valued by pupils and encourages them to behave well. Leaders have introduced an 'AG+ team' of staff to advise and improve how adjustments are made for pupils with additional needs. They have put effective strategies in place to help pupils to behave well. Bullying is not tolerated. Leaders resolve concerns swiftly if they arise. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning and engage well in lessons. Students in the post-16 provision act as sound role models for their younger peers. They behave kindly and show care for one another.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Recently, leaders have taken smart action to improve the quality of the curriculum across subjects. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have ensured that it is generally designed well to ensure that the knowledge pupils encounter builds sensibly on the things they have learned before. Across subjects, including in the sixth form, teachers have sound subject knowledge and use this well to explain concepts clearly.

On the whole, teachers check that pupils have understood the things they have been taught and adapt their teaching appropriately when needed. However, occasionally gaps in pupils' learning are not identified or addressed quickly enough. When this happens, pupils' progress slows.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' reading. They quickly identify where pupils have gaps in their reading ability and provide high-quality support to help these pupils to read with confidence and fluency. This work has a positive impact. In many subjects, including at post-16, staff draw on their knowledge of pupils' additional needs when considering how best to support pupils to learn the curriculum. While this is not consistently the case, in the main, this support enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn alongside their peers and make sound progress.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders take time to identify, understand and act on barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils may face. For instance, they use well-considered arrangements to support pupils

with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, reducing barriers to attendance. Furthermore, leaders use a range of approaches to help pupils to re-engage positively with their learning after periods of disruption. As a result, pupils at risk of suspension are increasingly able to sustain positive engagement.

Leaders understand the changes that are needed to better cater for the increasing number of pupils who join the school with education, health and care plans. For example, they have freed up staff and adjusted form structures to offer additional support to those who need it. Leaders work with families and external agencies to shape the support that pupils receive and to help raise their aspirations.

Generally, staff are trained effectively to check how well pupils, including those in the post-16 provision, develop academically, socially and emotionally. Leaders typically check and refine pupils' support, particularly when it is ineffective or not used as intended. Leaders review the pupil premium strategy diligently and adjust how they use funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit fully from additional tuition. Pupils known to social care thrive from the well-planned support that draws on input from the virtual school. Leaders use alternative provision carefully to support pupils to stay engaged in their learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are taking the right steps in the right order to bring about improvement across the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further, and have identified appropriate priorities to raise standards.

Leaders consistently make decisions that put pupils' needs first, including those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care. Leaders and staff have high aspirations for pupils and adjust strategies when required. For example, they have recently restructured middle leadership and expanded the pupil-welfare team to account for significant changes in the needs of their pupils. This work has ensured that there is sufficient capacity to improve pupils' learning and experiences.

Governors meet their statutory duties appropriately and provide suitable challenge and support to leaders. They ask informed questions about pupils' outcomes, safeguarding and the use of resources, including how pupil premium funding is spent. They check leaders' actions closely to ensure they secure positive outcomes for pupils.

Staff are starting to benefit from a coherent programme of professional development which is research based and aligns with the school's priorities. Leaders support early career teachers effectively. They manage staff's workload and wellbeing carefully, particularly when introducing new initiatives. Staff feel valued and are motivated to improve standards.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils generally benefit from a well-planned programme that promotes their personal development well. Through a broad range of activities, such as assemblies and workshops, pupils are supported to understand themselves and the world around them.

Pupils, including those in the post-16 provision, develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships through the personal, social and health education curriculum. They learn how to keep themselves safe by avoiding risks such as knife crime, drink driving and drug misuse. Most pupils take part in opportunities that help them to understand and contribute to their community. They learn about the importance of respecting others. For example, pupils gain an appreciation of cultures and traditions different from their own when celebrating religious festivals and learning about people's experiences and perspectives on diversity days. Nevertheless, pupils' knowledge of citizenship, including finances and the legal system, is less sophisticated and detailed.

Leaders use a broad range of leadership roles to encourage pupils to build resilience, responsibility and respect for others. For example, the student council enjoys contributing to improvements in pupils' experiences, such as enhancing sports equipment in school. Taking on these roles helps pupils to shape their school community and see their ideas lead to positive change.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive careers programme which ensures that pupils receive their full careers information, advice and guidance entitlement. Pupils, including those in the post-16 provision, benefit from opportunities to engage with employers, former pupils, training providers and further education settings. This allows them to explore a broad range of careers and make informed choices about their next steps. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to think about adulthood early.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard ●

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality and suitability of the 16 to 19 study programmes. They have developed a programme of study that is truly inclusive. This enables all pupils, regardless of their starting points, to pursue subjects and qualifications that are well aligned with their goals and aspirations. Leaders review the curriculum regularly and, where needed, carefully tailor it so that it meets students' individual needs precisely. For example, many pupils study a blend of academic and vocational qualifications. Students value this and praise the support that they receive.

Students, including those with additional needs, generally make sound progress from their starting points and are prepared well for their next steps. They receive helpful careers information and benefit from a range of opportunities to visit further education settings through the 'AG6' careers pathway. These experiences raise students' aspirations and help them to make informed decisions about their future choices.

Students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. For example, they can take part in medicine enrichment, international trips, the student union and charity work. This develops their confidence and broader life skills.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could. Inconsistency in the quality of teaching, and in how successfully teachers adapt their teaching to bridge gaps in pupils' learning, means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not routinely addressed. This limits how well pupils achieve in national examinations. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to address this.

Despite this, achievement for some pupil groups, such as those who are disadvantaged, is more secure. Overall, these pupils develop a sound understanding of the concepts they are taught. Consequently, these pupils achieve as well as their disadvantaged peers in national tests. Pupils who join the school with gaps in their foundational knowledge, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive targeted support that is well tailored to their needs and progress well from their starting points. Most pupils, including students in post-16 provision, leave school with sufficient qualifications to move successfully on to their next stage of education, employment and/or training.

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

Pupils are proud to be an 'Alder Granger'. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their attendance. Pupils understand the consequences of their behaviour. As a result, they strive to live up to the high expectations that staff have of their conduct. Pupils are polite and respectful. Bullying is rare and dealt with seriously if it occurs. This helps pupils to feel safe. Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils develop a mature understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They are encouraged to take part in diversity days and charitable work. This prepares them well for life beyond school. Students in the post-16 provision also benefit from a comprehensive wider-curriculum programme. For example, they enjoy completing research projects and leading social activities. This builds their confidence and readiness to contribute to wider society.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in wider learning opportunities through the 'Being an Alder Granger Award' programme. For example, pupils relish opportunities for international trips which broaden their experience of the wider world. They also enjoy an array of clubs, such as those for chess, newspaper, fitness and hair braiding. These opportunities help to nurture pupils' talents and interests. Leadership roles such as anti-bullying ambassadors also reinforce positive relationships and help to create the sense of community that is evident here.

Over the past few years, pupils have not consistently achieved well in national examinations. However, this is beginning to change. Pupils experience a well-ordered curriculum, which is generally taught well. This helps them to make sense of their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those facing other barriers to learning, receive helpful targeted support. This helps them to progress through the curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment consistently well across the school to check pupils' learning, and that they make sensible adjustments to their teaching to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge as they emerge.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently adapt their teaching with precision to take account of pupils' starting points and their individual needs effectively.
 - Leaders should ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum is delivered with sufficient depth and coherence so that pupils develop a deep understanding of key concepts, including cultural diversity and citizenship.
-

About this inspection

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.

The inspection started on 10 March 2026. Inspectors returned on 22 April 2026 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deferring-ofsted-inspections>).

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, school leaders, school governors, the school improvement partner, the virtual school head and a representative of the alternative provision during the inspection.

The inspection team scrutinised information and documents that the school provided. Inspectors visited a range of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Inspectors also had discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

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 chair of the board of governors in this school is Lesley Ella Doherty.

The school uses one registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Headteacher: Joanna Griffiths

Lead inspector:

Alexander Laney, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Amina Modan, His Majesty's Inspector

Derek Yarwood, Ofsted Inspector

Usman Kothia, His Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

Matt Symes, Ofsted Inspector

Thomas Wraith, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

902

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

902

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.29%

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: 28.9%

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

4.32%

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

13.64%

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

Well below 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)	25.4%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40.0%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	37.0	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	40.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	42.2	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.32	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.41	-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 (revised)	20.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	18.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	17.2%	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 (revised)	31.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	26.4	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	32.0	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)	-1.09	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.07	-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
2024/25 (revised)	20.6%	53.1%	-32.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	18.5%	53.1%	-34.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.2%	52.4%	-35.2 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 (revised)	31.4	50.4	-19.0
2023/24 (final)	26.4	50.0	-23.6
2022/23 (final)	32.0	50.3	-18.3

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)	-1.09	0.16	-1.26
2022/23 (final)	-1.07	0.17	-1.24

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)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	26.71	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	20.91	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.59	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	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)	7.1%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.4%	9.0%	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)	18.7%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.5%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.7%	26.5%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright