

Brentnall Academy

Address: Northumberland Street, Higher Broughton, Salford, Greater Manchester, M7 4RP

Unique reference number (URN): 149819

Inspection report: 16 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

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

How we evaluate safeguarding

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

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

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders, including from the trust, are determined that Brentnall Academy is a school that welcomes all its pupils. Leaders and staff act skilfully to spot and remove obstacles to pupils' success. They celebrate all pupils' strengths and achievements. Pupils, including those who face challenges in their lives, feel safe and feel that they belong here.

The school's leadership is highly ambitious for the learning and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders widen the path for pupils' experiences, so they can succeed. The school provides new opportunities that specific pupils need, so they have an equal chance to thrive. Where appropriate, disadvantaged pupils benefit greatly from the coaching that leaders arrange through thoughtful use of the school's extra funding. Pupils are highly positive about themselves and their prospects.

Central to the school's success is its skilful focus on special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that staff work very effectively with parents, carers and wider professionals to understand and meet pupils' needs. Leaders and staff expertly understand that for some pupils who speak English as an additional language, their needs are not related to SEND but about their learning of a new language. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND experience high-quality help. Staff sensitively support pupils with any of their difficulties, such as to understand social rules or to identify emotions.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

The trust board and its regional and local leadership are highly ambitious for pupils at the school. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Leaders, including from the trust, have established Brentnall Academy as a flourishing school. This impressive achievement has come about in just over 2 years of this new school's existence.

Leaders draw very well on their deep knowledge of high-quality primary education, special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding. As a result of this expert leadership, the school is on a very positive and upward path of continual improvement. Leaders provide parents and carers with a positive, well-supported relationship. High standards of pupil behaviour are evident each day. Pupils are safe and they feel that they belong here. Pupils excel in their wider development because of the school's ambitious provision. Leaders' skilful work has resulted in an effective curriculum and teaching, including in the early years, and positive attendance by pupils. These aspects of the school and many others are developing at pace.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have a clear, accurate understanding of what they will improve further at the school, so as to achieve their aspirations. They understand how to make changes that have a positive and long-lasting impact on pupils, families and staff. The trust board gives adept challenge and support to all of leaders' work. Leaders expertly support staff with their professional learning and workload and ensure that this is a happy, supportive workplace.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development alongside academic success. For example, pupils visit acclaimed gardens, museums and important sites in London. The school's residential trip to Prestatyn, which includes visits to a beach, zoo and theme park, is especially popular with pupils. Many pupils take on active roles, such as on the school council or as pupil ambassadors.

Pupils develop a deep and genuine regard for other people's faiths, cultures and communities. Staff teach pupils to have an impressive understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils strive to demonstrate kindness towards others. Such is the success of this work that it has attracted national attention from television and radio news programmes.

Leaders and staff provide pupils with information, advice and guidance that enable them to make safe, sensible choices about their day-to-day lives. Leaders provide very sensitive and well-thought-out support for pupils to understand and manage changes to their bodies. Pupils know that if they feel distressed, they can find expert pastoral support at the school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders draw successfully on links with a range of local employers to inspire pupils about possible careers, such as in engineering, the NHS or the rail industry. The school maps out for pupils how their learning in different curriculum subjects can help them to achieve their long-term aspirations.

Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that all pupils take part in the school's ambitious personal development offer. Disadvantaged pupils' wellbeing and learning benefit very well from leaders' decisions. When some pupils were highly anxious about nights away from home as part of a trip to London, leaders enabled these pupils to attend as a day trip instead. Likewise, the school provides some clubs at lunchtime, so that pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can take part.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

In this new school, pupils' achievement is steadily and markedly improving. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of basic skills, such as in mathematics, phonics, reading and talking. They also develop an effective knowledge of important words in different curriculum subjects. While the school develops pupils' writing skills reasonably well, some pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting, and their ability to write at length, are less well developed. In wider subjects, such as geography, pupils remember much essential knowledge with confidence and clarity.

The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above average in 2025. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was also above average. For all groups of pupils, attainment in reading was a strength. Pupils who attend

the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well, including towards the targets in their education, health and care plans.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

School and trust leaders pursue a well-thought-out plan to ensure that pupils' attendance and behaviour go from strength to strength. Most pupils attend school often. When this does not happen, leaders and staff act promptly and effectively to understand the causes of absence for any individual pupil, class or pupil group. The school's published attendance information does not reflect the complex circumstances that affect several pupils at the school, such as some of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' well-considered actions result in the rapid and notable improved attendance of individual pupils. High attendance is celebrated with all pupils, parents and carers. The school has established itself as a place where pupils want to be.

This is a harmonious school. At the start of each day, teachers support pupils to cooperate with one another and staff in an active class activity. Pupils then settle calmly in lessons. They are positive and self-controlled. Issues such as bullying or disruption to lessons are rare and managed very effectively by leaders. The school does not tolerate any kind of discrimination. If individual pupils, such as some pupils with SEND, struggle with their behaviour, staff support them skilfully to refine their conduct. In the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, staff use their high-level expertise to understand and guide pupils' behaviour very well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The trust ensures that the school has a well-thought-out and logically ordered curriculum, in which the key knowledge for staff to teach is identified clearly. Leaders' in-depth understanding of high-quality education helps them to provide expert support for staff's work. This results in effective and rapidly improving teaching, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils say that the quality of teaching is a fundamental strength of the school. Teachers use information about what pupils know and remember when they decide what to teach pupils next.

Mostly, teaching considers carefully the building blocks needed to learn each curriculum subject. However, some teaching of spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting is less well thought out. Some writing activities give pupils limited opportunities to write in enough length to communicate their knowledge well. As leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's work, they have spotted this issue. Recently, leaders have taken determined action to enhance the teaching of writing, but it is too soon to see the impact.

Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum and teaching place a significant emphasis on pupils' learning of phonics. Most aspects of reading are taught well, for instance staff enthuse pupils about the joy of listening to stories. Nevertheless, some teaching focuses less successfully on enabling pupils to learn about different authors and their specific works.

At the heart of the early years is a well-considered curriculum, which includes a deliberate focus on sharing high-quality stories with children. The class is a combined Nursery and Reception class in which staff are very clear on the different learning that they want each group of children to experience. Staff provide disadvantaged children with suitable support for their learning and wellbeing.

Staff give successful attention to children's personal and physical development and the improvement of their communication and language. As appropriate, they help children to start understanding phonics. Staff check carefully on children's knowledge to inform teaching.

Children become confident to talk, explore and use their knowledge, such as in the basics of mathematics. Staff give children appropriate opportunities for their physical development and mark making to support their understanding of writing. As part of their learning, children benefit from regular access to a large, well-organised outdoor area. Mostly, children gain the knowledge that they need for key stage 1.

The school's leadership of the early years is effective. For example, this means that the identification and support of any child with special educational needs and/or disabilities begins as soon as possible. Staff link well with other professionals and with parents and carers, in support of children's learning.

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

This is a school where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy learning and achieve well. Their personal, social and emotional development, along with their communication and language, is prioritised successfully from the start of their time in the early years.

Pupils make friends and learn to care for themselves and others thoughtfully. They learn much about kindness and respect. Pupils become caring, responsible, active citizens who are well prepared for their lives in modern Britain. For example, the oldest pupils develop a mature understanding of how a limited income in some families can lead to a shortage of food. Pupils work effectively with leaders to focus on this issue. For example, they organise the food 'pantry' for families in the school's red telephone box.

Throughout the whole school, pupils' behaviour is calm and self-controlled. Bullying is not a problem because leaders and staff act quickly and effectively on any issues. Typically, when pupils pass by, they greet adults positively or give a friendly wave. Pupils are interested in visitors and unafraid to start up conversation, such as with a friendly 'How are you?' Pupils do themselves proud by the very sensible ways that they conduct themselves.

Pupils benefit from the support of a caring staff team, whose members seek to know each pupil's individual needs and life experiences. This is very evident in the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, known as 'The Ark'. Pupils in this class make positive strides forward from their starting points.

All pupils are welcomed, supported and enabled to thrive because leaders and staff do all that they can to remove anything that gets in the way of pupils' success. This means that all the school's pupils take part in a wide range of well-thought-out activities, clubs and extra opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should make certain that their actions on attendance enable all pupils to benefit from the school's curriculum and teaching.
 - Leaders should ensure that in each key stage staff build pupils' handwriting, grammar and punctuation skills and develop pupils' ability to write longer pieces of work.
 - Leaders should make sure that through the school's new curriculum pupils further develop their understanding of the works of different authors.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the United 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, Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

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 executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with the regional director from the trust, a representative of the board of trustees and a representative of the trust's local governing board.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

An executive headteacher, Paul Graham, is responsible for this school and some other schools in the United Learning Trust.

Nursery children in the combined Nursery and Reception class attend the school full time.

The school includes a specially resourced provision for 12 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and an education, health and care plan. This class is known as 'The Ark'. There are 9 pupils on roll at present.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Head of school: Claire Woolley

Lead inspector:

Tim Vaughan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rachael Alarcon, Ofsted Inspector

Sue Mills, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

196

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: 272

School capacity

266

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

52.46%

Well 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: 26.3%

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

9.18%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.86%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24		61%	
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24		74%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24		72%	
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24		73%	
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	47%	Above
2023/24		46%	
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24		62%	
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24		58%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24		59%	
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	69%	-5 pp
2023/24		67%	
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24		80%	
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2023/24		78%	
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24		79%	
2022/23		79%	

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.5%	5.5%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	23.5%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.3%	14.6%	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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