

Millom School

Address: Salthouse Road, Millom, Cumbria, LA18 5AB

Unique reference number (URN): 112388

Inspection report: 23 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 have established a school where every pupil is known, included and valued. Inclusion is central to leaders' decision-making. Leaders identify pupils' needs at an early stage, often before pupils join the school. Leaders ensure that the right support is in place from the time pupils join the school in Year 7.

Leaders' work to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who are known to social care is highly effective. They use a wide range of information, including advice from specialists, to inform support plans. Leaders monitor pupils' progress and review support regularly. They communicate very well with parents and carers, and they ensure that staff remain well informed about pupils' changing needs. As a result, pupils receive the help that they need to make the most of all that is on offer at the school.

Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium funding, very effectively. They regularly review the impact of their strategies to support disadvantaged pupils, and they adapt their provision when necessary. Staff receive appropriate training that enables them to meet pupils' needs successfully. High-quality support extends beyond the classroom. Leaders ensure that all pupils access a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including extra-curricular activities. This means that vulnerable pupils participate fully in school life. They develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed alongside their peers.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Their work demonstrates secure knowledge and understanding. They remember important aspects of previous learning. In most subjects, pupils build their knowledge successfully over time. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress through the curriculum. They learn successfully and confidently apply their knowledge when faced with new learning. However, a few pupils develop gaps in their learning that hinder their ability to build on what they know and can do.

Pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge read with increasing confidence and use these skills effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. They communicate their ideas clearly and engage thoughtfully in discussion.

Published data indicates that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 is broadly in line with national averages. They are typically well prepared for their next steps and to meet their individual aspirations.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken positive action to improve pupils' attendance. They track attendance carefully and work closely with pupils and families to address the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending school regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved. It is broadly in line with national averages. However, attendance remains low for some vulnerable groups. In particular, disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be persistently absent. This limits their access to learning.

Leaders have ensured that pupils know and understand what is expected from them in terms of their behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils generally regulate their own behaviour. Lessons are calm and purposeful, with little low-level disruption.

Pupils conduct themselves well during social times and maintain positive relationships with one another. Leaders provide additional support for pupils who need help managing their behaviour. As a result, the number of suspensions is reducing over time.

Leaders monitor incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination carefully. They respond promptly when concerns arise. Pupils are confident that staff will take appropriate action if issues occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the pupils' needs and the community in which they live. The curriculum is logically ordered. This helps pupils to build knowledge and skills over time. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities study the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff understand pupils' needs and adapt learning appropriately.

Leaders have established clear expectations for teaching. In most subjects, teachers present new learning clearly and help pupils connect new knowledge to what they have learned previously. Teachers routinely revisit prior learning and use questioning to check pupils' understanding. Typically, teachers carefully check how well vulnerable pupils understand what has been taught. They provide additional support when needed. However, at times, teachers do not check on pupils' learning closely enough to identify and address gaps in learning and misconceptions.

Leaders identify gaps in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical knowledge at an early stage. They provide targeted support for pupils who need additional help. Consequently, pupils are increasingly able to learn well across the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are highly reflective in their practice and take appropriate actions when they identify areas that are in need of improvement. For example, they are taking the right steps to tackle the variability in teaching and students' achievement in the post-16 provision.

Leaders place pupils' needs at the centre of their work. They understand the challenges faced by the local community and respond thoughtfully to them. Leaders take appropriate action to remove barriers that may prevent pupils from participating fully in school life. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' focus on inclusion is reflected in the adaptations they have made to the enrichment programme and the support provided for vulnerable pupils.

Governors possess the knowledge and expertise required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They understand the school's strengths and priorities. They provide a careful balance of challenge and support. Governors maintain a clear focus on improving pupils' achievement. They fulfil their statutory duties.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders. They value professional development opportunities and appreciate leaders' efforts to manage workload appropriately. Staff report that leaders support them effectively in maintaining high standards of behaviour.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. Many value the support provided for pupils with SEND and recognise leaders' commitment to ensuring that all pupils can access the wider opportunities available.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a coherent programme to support pupils' personal development. This prepares pupils well for life beyond school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum and the citizenship programme are carefully designed and taught in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, online safety, diversity and equality. Leaders adapt the curriculums in response to local issues and emerging concerns. For example, pupils learn about water safety and the risks associated with vaping. Consequently, pupils develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. These include mountain biking, gardening, residential visits to Wales and skiing experiences in Austria. Leaders have adapted aspects of the enrichment offer so that pupils can take part during the school day. This helps overcome barriers that may otherwise prevent pupils from making the most of this rich offer. Leaders track participation rates carefully and encourage pupils who are less likely to engage. Leaders pay particular attention to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access opportunities that reflect their interests and needs. As a result, pupils benefit from experiences that broaden their horizons and develop their talents.

Careers education is effective. Leaders have established positive relationships with employers and education providers. Pupils receive impartial guidance and support to help them make informed decisions about their futures. Leaders identify pupils who may be at risk of not progressing to suitable destinations and provide additional support. Consequently, almost all pupils move on to appropriate education, employment or training.

Staff know pupils well and provide effective pastoral support. Leaders work closely with external professionals when required and implement thoughtful strategies to meet pupils'

needs. Pupils develop resilience, confidence and positive relationships with others.

Needs attention

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Students in the post-16 provision do not achieve as well as they should. Their attainment in national examinations is below national averages. Teachers' inconsistent use of appropriate learning activities to deepen students' knowledge contributes to their underachievement. Leaders have identified achievement in the sixth form as a priority, and they are bringing about positive change. However, these actions are at an early stage, and it is too soon to see the impact of this work in pupils' outcomes.

Leaders demonstrate an unwavering commitment to maintaining post-16 provision for the local community. They provide programmes of study that reflect students' individual aspirations and circumstances. Students benefit from teaching that supports them to engage positively with learning.

Students experience a range of opportunities that prepare them for their next steps. These include visits to universities, engagement with apprenticeship providers and opportunities to explore future career pathways. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support to access all that is on offer. Most students progress to appropriate destinations in education, employment or training.

Students contribute positively to school life. They support younger pupils with reading, assist with physical education activities and participate in leadership opportunities. These experiences help students develop confidence, responsibility and independence.

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

Pupils are happy and enjoy their experiences at Millom School. They learn in a calm and purposeful environment where disruption to learning is rare. Pupils behave well and show respect towards one another, staff and visitors. Pupils forge positive relationships with staff and each other. As a result, pupils feel that they belong and attend school regularly.

Leaders understand pupils' individual needs. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the help they need to be successful in their learning. Pupils who experience difficulties with behaviour receive timely support from a range of adults. Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum that enables them to achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps into education, employment or training.

Pupils feel safe. They know who to approach if they have concerns and are confident that staff will listen and help. Pupils' worries, including bullying issues, are addressed promptly. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through a programme that reflects local and national risks. For example, they learn about online safety, anti-social behaviour and the

risks associated with e-scooters. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of how to stay safe both in and beyond school.

Pupils are articulate and confident. They benefit from a range of opportunities that develop their interests and talents. Pupils speak positively about the opportunities to participate in sports, create podcasts and explore ecology within the local area. These experiences broaden pupils' horizons and help them discover new interests. Leaders ensure that pupils engage with employers and post-16 education providers so that they understand the opportunities available to them in the future.

Students in the post-16 provision actively volunteer their services. For example, they support younger pupils with their learning and represent the school in local events. As a result, students leave as positive ambassadors and active citizens in society.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers' checks on learning consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' learning so that they can build their knowledge securely over time.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers use appropriate learning activities to deepen students' knowledge in the post-16 provision so that they achieve well.
 - Leaders should continue to improve attendance for all pupils, and especially for those disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Elsa Mason.

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, curriculum leaders, staff and pupils.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority during the inspection.

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 does not use alternative provision.

Stephen Kelly: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Usman Kothia, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Thomas Fay, Ofsted Inspector

Jacqueline Cahalin, Ofsted Inspector

John Cowper, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

469

Well below 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

775

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.65%

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

3.84%

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

6.40%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

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 (final)	41.0%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.8%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	44.9	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.2	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.7	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.28	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.50	-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 (final)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	15.8%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.0%	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 (final)	37.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.4	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)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' 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 (final)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	15.8%	53.1%	-37.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	24.0%	52.4%	-28.4 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 (final)	37.6	50.4	-12.8
2023/24 (final)	31.0	50.0	-19.0
2022/23 (final)	33.4	50.3	-16.9

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)	-0.75	0.16	-0.91
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	0.17	-0.92

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 (revised)	85%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Not available

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 (final)	20.95	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.31	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.74	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 (final)	-0.7	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.9	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 (3 term)	8.2%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.5%	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 (3 term)	23.6%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	26.2%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	28.0%	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



© Crown copyright