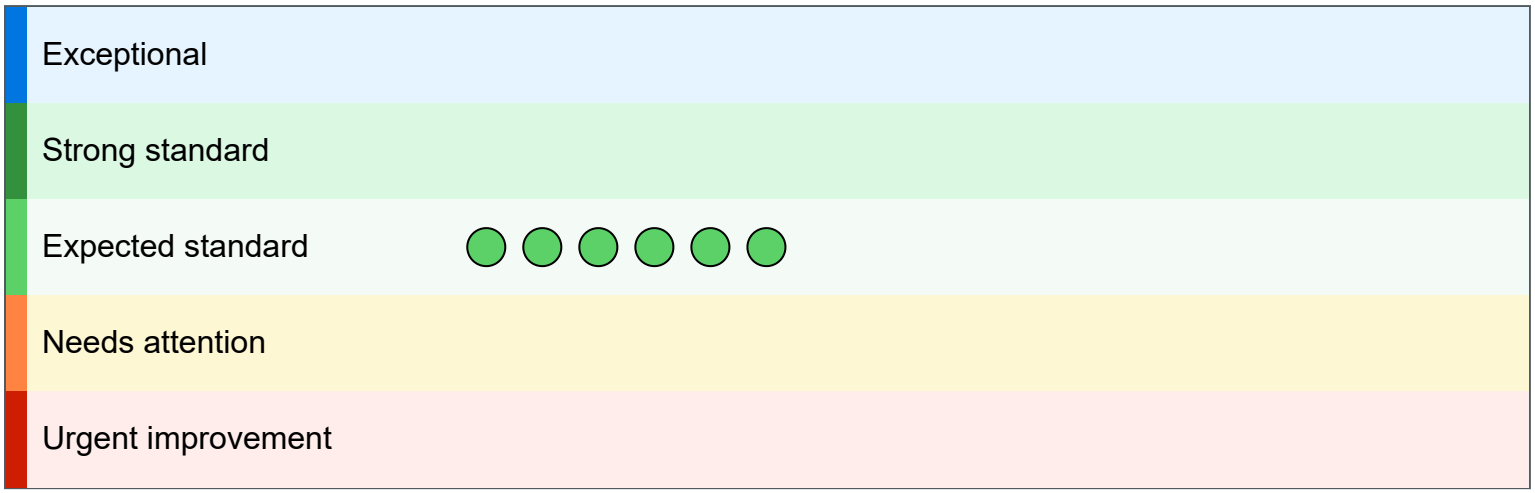
# The Byrchall High School

**Address:** Warrington Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, WN4 9PQ

**Unique reference number (URN):** 138699

# Inspection report: 6 October 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

## Achievement

**Expected standard**

As pupils progress through the curriculum, they typically gain the knowledge and skills that allow them to access their chosen destinations. The work they produce is usually of an appropriate quality and demonstrates their understanding of what they have been taught. This is also true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make progress from their starting points. Pupils usually correct errors in their own work. In most subjects, repeated mistakes are rare. Most pupils receive the help that they need to close gaps in their reading, writing or mathematical knowledge quickly. This helps them to access the curriculum successfully and equips them with important skills for life.

Pupils' attainment in national examinations for English and science has historically declined. Leaders are addressing this, and pupils' work in these subjects is improving. That said, pupils achieve results in national examinations that are broadly in line with national averages. This helps pupils access appropriate education, employment or training after leaving secondary school.

## Attendance and behaviour

**Expected standard**

Leaders have strengthened their strategic approach to attendance and behaviour. They monitor the attendance of all pupils closely, particularly those who struggle to attend regularly. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance, and they provide appropriate support where it may need improvement. This includes home visits and the provision of designated areas that provide a calm and private start to the school day. Despite the long distances some pupils travel to school, attendance has improved over recent years and is in line with the national average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has also improved. Persistent absence has decreased considerably as a result of the actions leaders have taken.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff and pupils understand the clear rules and routines that leaders have established. This helps to create a generally calm and purposeful environment, including in lessons and at social times. Most pupils engage well in their learning, although some do not participate fully. Pupils respect each other. Incidents of discrimination, bullying and unkind behaviour are uncommon. When incidents occur, leaders take prompt action to address them. Leaders provide additional support for pupils who find it difficult to regulate their emotions. This helps these pupils to focus on their learning.

## Curriculum and teaching

**Expected standard**

Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills that pupils need to access the next stage of their education, employment or training. They have used this understanding to design a curriculum that sequences learning logically. Leaders adapt the curriculum appropriately to reflect pupils' different starting points. As a result, the curriculum is ambitious.

In lessons, teachers typically provide clear explanations of increasingly complex ideas. Across most subjects, they use a range of methods to check pupils' understanding

effectively. Teachers usually set appropriate tasks for pupils to apply what they have been taught. Pupils receive helpful guides to support them with these tasks. However, this support sometimes limits pupils' independence. Pupils who face barriers to their learning typically get the specific support they need. This includes adaptations such as the use of technology or additional in-class help. Teachers usually provide meaningful feedback to pupils about their work. Pupils receive the help that they need to act on this feedback so that their work improves.

An increasing number of pupils enter the school with gaps in their essential reading, writing and mathematical knowledge. Leaders have developed programmes that help pupils to address these gaps. This includes additional sessions with specialist teachers who provide well-matched support to pupils.

## Inclusion

**Expected standard**

Leaders have established a secure approach to identifying pupils who face barriers to their education or wellbeing. When necessary, they work with other professionals to identify pupils' specific needs. Leaders use this information to reduce barriers and create individualised strategies that they share with relevant staff. They routinely review these strategies against pupils' progress and make adjustments when needed. Leaders use additional funding appropriately to reduce financial barriers and provide disadvantaged pupils with additional academic support.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported, especially those in the specially resourced provision. Here, leaders adapt the curriculum to reflect pupils' different starting points. When appropriate, these pupils join lessons with their peers, helping them to feel included in school life.

Leaders work with local authorities' virtual schools to support pupils known or previously known to social care. They carefully monitor these pupils' progress and create appropriate plans when further help is needed. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. Leaders ensure that this provision is suitable and meets pupils' needs. Consequently, most pupils who face barriers to their education or wellbeing make progress from their starting points.

## Leadership and governance

**Expected standard**

The school's leadership team is relatively new. That said, leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the school's provision. They know where the school's practice is strongest and prioritise appropriate areas for development. For example, attendance has improved every year under this leadership. Those responsible for governance share leaders' ambitions for the school. They bring relevant knowledge and skills to support and challenge leaders to develop the school further.

Staff value the support and care they receive from leaders. They feel part of the school's vision and community. They appreciate how leaders and those responsible for governance consider their wellbeing. Leaders have used their knowledge of the school to design an effective professional development programme. This helps staff to develop their understanding of curriculum design and how to support pupils who may face barriers to their

education. Moreover, leaders have worked with others to establish an effective specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders' decisions and actions reflect the best interests of pupils.

Parents and carers are proud to belong to the school community. They appreciate how caring and supportive the staff are and recognise the recent improvements that leaders have made at the school.

### Personal development and wellbeing

**Expected standard**

Leaders know their pupils well. They understand the challenges that pupils encounter in society as well as the specific challenges that some of their pupils face. Leaders use this knowledge to design a personal development programme that prepares pupils for independent life in modern Britain. Consequently, pupils articulate a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online and in different types of relationships. They know where to get support, both inside and outside of school. They demonstrate respect and tolerance for individual differences. For example, pupils stand up for others' rights and reject judgements based on somebody's religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. Pupils have some understanding of the role of democracy and how to manage their finances.

Leaders respond well to pupils' changing needs. They adapt the personal development programme in response to incidents so that pupils benefit from additional education. When necessary, leaders invite other professionals and agencies to work with small groups of pupils who need additional help to keep themselves safe. The trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel comfortable asking staff for help. Moreover, peers share worries about their friends and staff are quick to notice any changes in pupils that may be of concern. This supportive community approach helps leaders to put the necessary support in place promptly.

The enrichment programme provides pupils with a variety of activities to develop their skills and interests. For example, they build their independence through supervised study sessions and develop their teamwork and communication skills through sporting and theatrical activities. Leaders arrange trips to the theatre, museums and abroad. This broadens pupils' appreciation of culture and languages. The school provides pupils with clear careers guidance. Pupils learn about different occupations and visit local colleges and universities. They benefit from careers guidance and almost all go on to appropriate and ambitious destinations.

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

When pupils attend this school, they become part of a unified community, built around mutual respect and support. They make meaningful friendships and enjoy spending time with one another. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff. At social times, pupils share their successes with teachers and know that staff have their best interests at heart. Pupils are comfortable raising any concerns they may have. They know that leaders will give them the support they need. Leaders address any incidents, such as bullying, appropriately. Pupils understand the importance of treating others with kindness and practise this in their

day-to-day lives. Pupils are safe. This helps them to feel comfortable at school and encourages regular attendance.

Pupils benefit from the school's enrichment programme. This includes a range of clubs such as science, sport and gaming, as well as trips to local places of interest. These experiences enable pupils to explore their interests and broaden their cultural understanding. Leaders bring the community together. For example, pupils perform their annual school show to members of the public. Pupils demonstrate teamwork by competing in local and national competitions. Leaders routinely praise pupils' achievements, particularly at the annual 'Founders' Day'. Here, pupils, including those who face challenges in their lives, are celebrated in front of the whole school. Pupils value this highly.

Most pupils engage well in their lessons. They appreciate their teachers' help in understanding what they are being taught. On the whole, this help is effective. Pupils who face barriers to their education or wellbeing typically get the support they need. This is particularly the case for pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision. Consequently, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. Pupils typically achieve results in national examinations that are in line with national averages. This helps them to access the next stage of their education, employment or training.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught well across all subjects and key stages so that this helps pupils to deepen their knowledge, to apply it independently and to improve their attainment in national examinations.
- Leaders should continue to embed their strategic approach to attendance so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend more frequently.
- Leaders should continue to embed their strategic approach to behaviour so that all pupils demonstrate self-discipline and commitment to their learning.

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## About this inspection

This school is part of the Makerfield Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Philippe Paul, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Tushingham.

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

This inspection took place on 6 and 7 October 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with trustees, governors and leaders during the inspection. They also spoke with some staff and pupils and considered parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey as part of 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 includes provision for 8 pupils who face cognitive barriers to their learning. Additionally, the school includes provision for 8 pupils who are having their barriers to learning or wellbeing assessed before moving to another provider.

The school currently makes use of 7 alternative provisions, including 6 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Philippe Paul

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**Lead inspector:**
Tom Theobold, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**
Barbara Dutton, Ofsted Inspector
Alexia Barnes Gargrave, Ofsted Inspector
Aly Spencer, Ofsted Inspector
Erin Wheeler, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 6 October 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

**1,138**
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: 1,063

**School capacity**

## 1,216
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: 1,154

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

## 37.17%
Close to average

**What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

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

## 4.39%
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: 3.53%

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

## 17.40%
Above average

**What does this mean?**

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

National average: 14.0%

**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 (final)** | 39.0% | 45.4% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 42.8% | 45.9% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 41.1% | 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 (final)** | 41.3 | 46.1 | Below |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 43.4 | 45.9 | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 45.1 | 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)** | -0.40 | -0.03 | Below |
| **2022/23 (final)** | -0.32 | -0.03 | Below |
| **2021/22 (final)** | -0.06 | -0.03 | Close to average |

## 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)** | 22.2% | 25.8% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 23.0% | 25.8% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 30.4% | 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)** | 32.9 | 34.9 | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 33.1 | 34.6 | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 39.4 | 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)** | -0.95 | -0.57 | Below |
| **2022/23 (final)** | -0.86 | -0.57 | Close to average |
| **2021/22 (final)** | -0.82 | -0.55 | 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)** | 22.2% | 53.1% | -30.9 pp |

| Year | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2023/24 (final)** | 23.0% | 53.1% | -30.1 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 30.4% | 52.4% | -22.0 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)** | 32.9 | 50.4 | -17.5 |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 33.1 | 50.0 | -17.0 |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 39.4 | 50.3 | -10.9 |

### 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)** | -0.95 | 0.16 | -1.12 |
| **2022/23 (final)** | -0.86 | 0.17 | -1.03 |
| **2021/22 (final)** | -0.82 | 0.15 | -0.98 |

## 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)** | 90% | 92% | Average |
| **2022 leavers (revised)** | 90% | 93% | Average |
| **2021 leavers (revised)** | 92% | 94% | 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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2025/26 (1 term)** | 8.0% | 7.8% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (3 term)** | 9.4% | 8.4% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 11.5% | 8.9% | 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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2025/26 (1 term)** | 19.8% | 21.5% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (3 term)** | 25.1% | 23.4% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 30.9% | 25.6% | 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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