

Carmountside Primary Academy

Address: Woodhead Road, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST2 8DJ

Unique reference number (URN): 139846

Inspection report: 30 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 ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing are a significant strength of the school. Leaders have created a highly ambitious and well-considered programme that reflects a deep understanding of pupils' lives, experiences and needs. Personal development is woven through the curriculum, pastoral provision, enrichment offer and wider culture of the school.

Pupils develop secure knowledge about relationships, mental and physical health, equality, diversity, citizenship and staying safe. Leaders ensure that learning is reinforced through meaningful real-life experiences and opportunities for discussion. Pupils demonstrate the impact of this work. They show maturity when discussing racism, discrimination, online safety, inclusion and respect for others. Older pupils are reflective, articulate and thoughtful. They know where to seek help and demonstrate a strong awareness of the importance of treating others fairly and respectfully.

Leadership opportunities are extensive and meaningful. Pupils contribute through school council, the 'RUGS' team (really useful generation of students), ambassador roles, and environmental initiatives. Pupils know that their views matter and are proud of the work they do. The librarians are proactive in promoting reading for pleasure.

The enrichment offer is extensive and carefully tailored so to support all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders systematically track participation and ensure that vulnerable pupils access opportunities. Pupils speak enthusiastically about clubs, performances, educational visits, ambassadorial responsibilities and community projects. These experiences broaden horizons, develop talents and strengthen pupils' aspirations for the future.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils benefit from personalised interventions and strong relationships with staff. Leaders demonstrate an exceptionally detailed understanding of pupils' circumstances and respond proactively to emerging needs.

Transition arrangements and preparation for future life are equally strong. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of experiences which broaden aspirations and help prepare them for the next stage of education. Older pupils speak confidently about their ambitions and demonstrate increasing readiness for secondary school.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

There is a clear culture in the school that attendance is everyone's responsibility. Although current attendance remains below national figures, leaders have secured measurable improvements, including a reduction in the number of pupils that are persistently absent. This is because leaders have prioritised attendance and established increasingly effective systems. Leaders carefully monitor attendance patterns. They demonstrate a clear

understanding of the circumstances surrounding individual pupils which may impact on their attendance at school. Leaders use a range of strategies, including targeted family support, attendance meetings, home visits, breakfast provision, pastoral support and effective partnership with external agencies.

Behaviour is typically positive. During lessons and around school, most pupils demonstrate respectful attitudes towards adults and one another. In lessons, pupils are generally focused and want to do well. Relationships between adults and pupils are a notable strength, which helps pupils to make positive behaviour choices and engage with school life. Leaders use a range of approaches, including daily meet-and-greet routines and personalised interventions, to support individual pupils with their behaviour choices. Staff take the time to understand the potential reasons behind pupils' behaviour. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils recognise that bullying rarely happens and are confident that staff will deal with behaviours effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum that is increasingly well sequenced, designed to strengthen pupils' knowledge and skills over time. There is a clear emphasis on reading, writing, communication, vocabulary and mathematics as the building blocks for future learning.

Leaders check the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. They use this information to inform decisions about how to strengthen the curriculum further. Leaders provide effective support to help teachers develop the quality of their practice. This means that teachers generally deliver the curriculum well. Science is particularly well developed and reflects effective subject leadership.

Teaching strategies are carefully considered in order to help pupils know more and remember more. Teachers typically use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. Carefully planned professional development opportunities for staff has improved consistency in classroom practice. Leaders ensure that staff have secure subject knowledge so that they can teach confidently.

Pupils are routinely given opportunities to revisit, practise and apply learning. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught explicitly. This helps pupils develop their understanding and increase confidence. Staff adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are aware of some inconsistency in this area and are working to address this.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school's inclusive ethos is evident throughout daily life and is a strength of the school. Leaders have created a culture where pupils are supported to participate fully, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances. Pupils are taught to respect differences, value one another and contribute positively to the community.

Leaders demonstrate a detailed understanding of vulnerability, including those pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and

those who are known or previously known to social care. They use this knowledge to identify needs early and reduce barriers to learning. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and families to ensure support is carefully matched to pupils' needs and circumstances.

Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum and wider opportunities as their peers. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained, and regular opportunities are given to share good practice and reflect on what is working well. Adaptations are generally implemented effectively.

Pupils from all backgrounds participate meaningfully in school life and benefit from a genuine sense of belonging. Leaders monitor participation and take action to ensure vulnerable pupils access enrichment and leadership opportunities.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils well. Collaboration with the virtual school is effective.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness, strengths and areas to improve. They select the right priorities, carefully planning next steps. Leaders demonstrate exceptionally detailed knowledge of pupils and families, which enables them to make informed decisions in the best interest of the child. There is a focused approach to reducing barriers to learning while maintaining ambition for all pupils.

Professional development is a strength. Training opportunities carefully match the school priorities and individual staff needs. Staff benefit from extensive support, including training to support those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example dyslexia awareness and autism training.

Leaders routinely monitor the impact of their work. School leaders engage positively with challenge from the local governing board and the trust. Senior leaders contribute to wider improvement work. Opportunities have been created for staff to collaborate across schools and develop leadership expertise.

Leaders' work is beginning to have a positive impact. Attendance is improving, persistent absence is reducing, personal development provision is particularly effective, and curriculum implementation is becoming more consistent. Staff appreciate the way leaders consider their workload and prioritise their wellbeing. Overwhelming, staff say they feel valued and proud to work at the school.

Governors and trust leaders are passionate about the pupils having the best possible start in life. This includes their social and emotional development through thoughtful enrichment opportunities. Leaders provide rigorous challenge. Careful monitoring and partnership work with the school leaders strengthens leaders' capacity to evaluate effectiveness and refine improvement planning.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Achievement is improving but remains less secure than other aspects of the school's work. Published results at the end of key stage 2 are below the national average. This means that pupils leave less prepared for secondary school than they should be. Leaders recognise that improvements in curriculum implementation have not yet translated consistently into outcomes. This is particularly evident for some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There have been notable improvements in phonics outcomes over time. Generally, pupils reach the appropriate standard by the end of Year 1. Pupils retain and apply phonics knowledge effectively. There has also been an improvement in the teaching of multiplication. Outcomes by the end of Year 4 are at least in line with national averages.

Leaders have established stronger curriculum structures and teaching approaches which are helping pupils acquire knowledge and skills more effectively than previously. Leaders recognise there is further work to do with spelling accuracy, presentation and writing fluency.

Early years

Needs attention ●

The early years curriculum appropriately prioritises personal, social and emotional development and foundational skills. However, provision is not yet consistently effective. Some children find it difficult to sustain attention and remain engaged in learning activities. Leaders recognise that curriculum implementation is relatively new and requires further embedding.

The early years is nurturing and inclusive. Staff build warm, nurturing relationships with children, ensuring that they feel safe and settled. Children develop confidence, communication skills and independence. Relationships are positive and supportive, and children engage readily with adults. The environment promotes exploration, physical development and social interaction. In preschool, children show high levels of engagement and enthusiasm. For example, exploring the 'beach' and learning how to be safe with tools.

Leaders place considerable emphasis on communication and language. Children are encouraged to engage in conversation, develop vocabulary and communicate with each other. Sharing of stories encourages a love of books. Phonics is generally taught well. Teachers model sounds accurately and support children to work out what simple words say. Generally, children make progress from their starting points, particularly in these areas.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and emerging additional needs are identified appropriately and supported through partnership working with families and external professionals. Welfare systems and processes are effective.

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

Leaders are passionate about creating a school where every pupil feels valued. Strong, trusting relationships help pupils feel safe and confident. Staff know the pupils well. This is because they take the time to understand them as individuals. This helps pupils feel supported and valued. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Staff greet pupils positively at the start of the day and pupils generally settle quickly into established routines.

Leaders place pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's work. They go above and beyond to provide opportunities that will develop pupils' character and understanding of the world. Pupils value these opportunities. They speak enthusiastically about clubs, educational visits, ambassadorial roles, performances, sporting opportunities, environmental projects and leadership responsibilities. These experiences help broaden pupils' horizons, raise aspirations and develop confidence.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. When within the community and visiting new places, pupils are noted for their excellent behaviour and courteous manner.

Pupils enjoy lessons and speak positively about the wider curriculum. Older pupils, particularly in Year 6, demonstrate increasing confidence and resilience. Bullying is rare, but if it occurs, pupils know that staff will act quickly. Pupils consistently describe the school as a place where adults care about them, listen to them and help them to overcome difficulties.

The school's inclusive approach means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those supported by social care participate fully in school life. Leaders are determined that pupils access the same opportunities and experiences, regardless of their starting points or barriers.

Over time, the curriculum and teaching have been less than secure. This has meant that some pupils have not learned as well as they should and have not achieved the outcomes they were capable of. Leaders know this and have taken effective action to improve the curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure staff consistently check learning to spot mistakes and misconceptions quickly, helping pupils correct these accurately and build secure, foundational understanding.
 - Leaders should ensure that the intended early years curriculum is delivered consistently well across all the provision, and that staff are supported to do so.
 - Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is of consistently high quality across subjects and year groups so to improve pupils' achievement.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Societas Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jon Lovatt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carol Dudson.

The chair of the local board of governors in the school is Michael Fair.

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 school leaders, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher/special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They also spoke with representatives of the local governing board, including the chair of governors, and members of the trust, including the CEO.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has a nursery and pre-school provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Lisa Challinor

Lead inspector:

Karen Hambleton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, Ofsted Inspector

Antony Bradshaw, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

222

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

210

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

67.22%

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

1.35%

Below 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

33.78%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

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	32%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	32%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	23%	60%	Below

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	60%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	73%	Below

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	66%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	65%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

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	48%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	73%	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 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	28%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	26%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	9%	44%	Below

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	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	57%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	60%	Below

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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	58%	Below

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	48%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27%	59%	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 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	28%	68%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	26%	69%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	9%	66%	-57 pp

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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	80%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	78%	-33 pp

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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	52%	78%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	78%	-9 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	77%	-32 pp

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	48%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	48%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	79%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	79%	-52 pp

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)	6.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.0%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	5.9%	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
2024/25 (3 term)	22.5%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	26.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.8%	16.2%	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.

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.

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