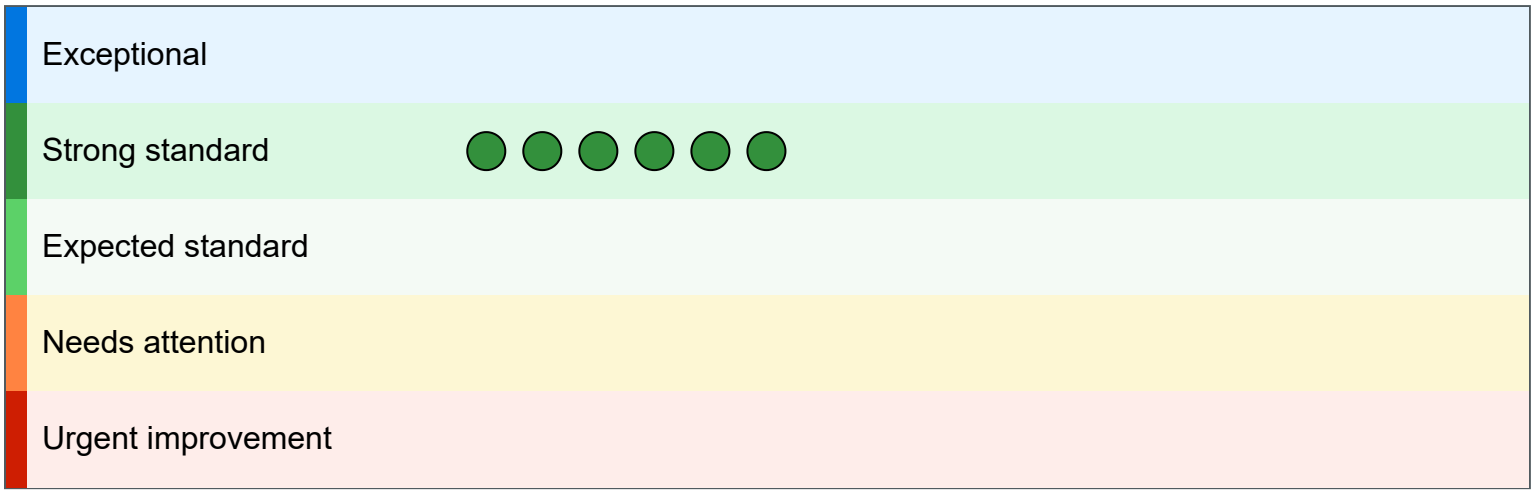
Milton School

Address: Storey Street, Swinton, Mexborough, S64 8QG

Unique reference number (URN): 150133

Inspection report: 14 July 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.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve well at this school. No matter what pupils' starting points are, they receive support to make steady and consistent progress in their skills and understanding. Staff help pupils to understand what they learn and what their next target is. As a result, pupils take pride in their work and know how to improve. Regardless of their pathway, pupils know more and can do more as they progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum carefully. They ensure that pupils work towards a wide range of external qualifications in English, mathematics, science and other subjects as they approach the end of key stage 4. These qualifications vary and are closely matched to pupils' specific needs. Alongside academic qualifications, pupils are gradually prepared for adulthood as they move through key stages 3 and 4. As a result, pupils leave this school well prepared for their ambitious next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders have prioritised school attendance in recent years. They work hard to understand the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending school regularly. They use various successful approaches to remove any obstacles. Additionally, leaders make sure that the school is a welcoming and supportive environment that pupils want to be part of. Leaders have sustained rapidly improving rates of attendance over time. Persistent absence has steadily declined. Pupils now attend school more often than they have done historically.

Leaders have raised their expectations for pupil behaviour significantly. There are clear and consistent rules that all pupils understand and follow closely. Pupils are rewarded for their positive behaviour and they are supported by staff who promote warm relationships. Bullying and other serious misbehaviour, including discrimination or harassment, are very rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Staff understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities well and provide effective support to help them behave appropriately at school. Suspensions have decreased sharply. The school is a calm, friendly and welcoming place where pupils treat staff and each other with respect. Pupils enjoy their lessons and stay focused on their learning without distractions.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have established a series of carefully sequenced curriculum pathways to meet pupils' diverse needs. These pathways are designed successfully to help pupils gradually build their skills, knowledge and confidence. Leaders have identified the small steps that pupils will take over time. These steps are essential for building important basic skills in language, reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have a clear understanding of how effectively teachers and other staff teach the curriculum. They continually check the quality of teaching in lessons. They ensure that all pupils benefit from highly effective teaching that is tailored consistently to their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers skilfully adapt the classroom environment and their teaching approaches to meet pupils' needs. They adapt their approaches to suit pupils' starting points. Staff carefully and regularly check pupils' progress during lessons and deal with any misconceptions pupils have. No step is too small to be celebrated. Teachers revisit past learning regularly to help pupils remember and build on their knowledge.

Staff are ambitious for pupils. They constantly review the progress that pupils make through the curriculum and encourage them to extend their skills and knowledge. As a result, pupils consistently and steadily build their knowledge and skills over time.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have established a range of effective methods to identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. Pupils learn in classes that suit their specific special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff check pupils' progress through the curriculum closely. This ensures that the support pupils receive is appropriate, amended where necessary, removes barriers to learning and deals with any new needs that arise. Leaders use a wide range of out-of-class interventions to support pupils' diverse needs. These have a positive impact on pupils.

Leaders actively seek external support when necessary. They collaborate with various professionals to ensure that each child receives the help they need. For example, leaders employ occupational and speech therapists to enhance the work pupils do in class and further develop pupils' skills.

Pupils known to social care receive careful support. Leaders work closely with the local authority and other agencies. They use the additional funding for children in care to provide targeted support. This helps to ensure that they make the best progress possible.

Leaders spend the extra funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully and base their decisions on research. Their approach to using this funding has improved the experience and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils effectively, boosting their achievement, confidence and resilience.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a deep understanding of the school, including its strengths and areas for further development. They have worked consistently to enhance the school and embed changes over the past 3 years. Leaders have systematically worked on priority areas, leading to a significant cultural shift within the school. They are supported by a dedicated interim executive board (IEB). Members of the IEB bring a diverse range of specialist skills and experience to the school. They provide school leaders with effective support and challenge. Leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities very effectively.

Leaders have brought about sustained improvement by ensuring that staff possess the skills and knowledge they need to support pupils consistently well. They have established a comprehensive programme for professional learning that staff value. Staff receive extensive training both within the school and from across the trust. Leaders regularly check that staff apply this training effectively when working with pupils. They provide additional, tailored support when necessary.

Leaders form positive relationships with parents and carers. They provide numerous opportunities for parents to visit the school and request any support that they might need. Parents appreciate this and generally view the school as a partner in their child's education.

Staff take pride in working at this school. While staff have experienced an increase in their workload as they collaborate to improve the school, they feel that leaders are attentive to their wellbeing and ensure that the tasks they undertake directly benefit pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have established a well-structured personal development programme that runs throughout the school day and year. They have implemented well-sequenced curriculums for religious education and for personal, social and health education (PSHE). The PSHE curriculum includes age-appropriate relationships and sex education that aligns with pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. The planned programme helps pupils learn about the wider world and the different perspectives people have. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline. They learn important concepts such as fairness, tolerance and democracy. Pupils have opportunities to explore and experience these concepts, for example, by voting for members of the pupil leadership team. Teachers regularly check pupils' knowledge and understanding of the PSHE curriculum and fill any gaps in knowledge. As a result, pupils steadily develop deep and secure knowledge as they progress through the school.

Leaders' planned programme carefully fosters pupils' independence and resilience. As they advance through the school, pupils begin to prepare for adulthood by learning essential skills such as basic budgeting, road safety and preparing simple meals. The programme includes a wide variety of linked trips and experiences, such as transport training and residential trips. Pupils receive plenty of help and support to plan their next steps after leaving school. There is a well-planned careers programme in place. As part of this, pupils visit a local careers fair and engage in outdoor work in their community. During key stage 4, all pupils receive independent one-to-one careers guidance with specialist staff.

The school encourages pupils to find their joy in life. There are several popular lunchtime clubs, including a choir, football club and guinea pig care. The school choir recently participated in a city-wide performance that pupils thoroughly enjoyed. Pupils' ideas and preferences are reflected in the activities offered to them. Leaders ensure that the activities on offer are accessible to all pupils.

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

Pupils at Milton School feel both supported and celebrated. All pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They learn to respect and celebrate each other's differences and to take pride in their own achievements.

Pupils enjoy their lessons, which are skilfully adapted to meet their needs. Teachers work closely with pupils to gradually build their skills and knowledge. Pupils produce work they take great pride in. They know what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils receive

extra support to address specific barriers to learning. For example, some pupils work one-to-one with members of staff to improve their ability to follow instructions. Others work in small groups to learn how to take turns. As pupils reach the end of key stage 4, they complete appropriate qualifications in a range of subjects. These qualifications help them move on to next steps that match their interests and needs.

Pupils feel safe at school. Staff provide a calm and supportive environment. Pupils understand the school rules and know that staff will step in if there is any unkind behaviour or bullying. Pupils treat each other and staff with respect. Those who need help managing their emotions receive it. Over time, pupils learn to manage these emotions on their own. Pupils' attendance continues to improve rapidly. Pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly so they do not miss valuable learning. Some pupils receive effective support to help them to attend more often.

There are plenty of interesting clubs and activities available to pupils to support their wider development. Pupils are regularly asked what they would like to do, and leaders do their best to arrange these activities. For example, the school choir enjoys performing in school and at local events. Other pupils enjoy helping to care for the school guinea pig. Older pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential trip as they begin to prepare for adulthood.

Next steps

- Leaders should further refine the school curriculum and classroom practices to meet pupils' increasingly complex needs.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Venn 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 (CEO), Simon Witham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Terry Johnson.

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

This inspection took place on 14 and 15 July 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.

Inspectors spoke with the executive principal, school leaders, trust leaders, teachers and other staff, pupils, the CEO and other trust board members 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 currently uses no alternative provision.

This is the first inspection of this school since it joined the Venn Academy Trust in July 2023.

Executive principal : Nicola Witham

Lead inspector:
Gemma Dixon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Richard Jones, His Majesty's Inspector
Sacha Schofield, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

167

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.

School capacity

150

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

61.08%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

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

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
2024/25 (3 term)	11.8%
2023/24 (3 term)	15.0%
2022/23 (3 term)	17.5%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (3 term)	32.5%
2023/24 (3 term)	42.7%
2022/23 (3 term)	46.4%

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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