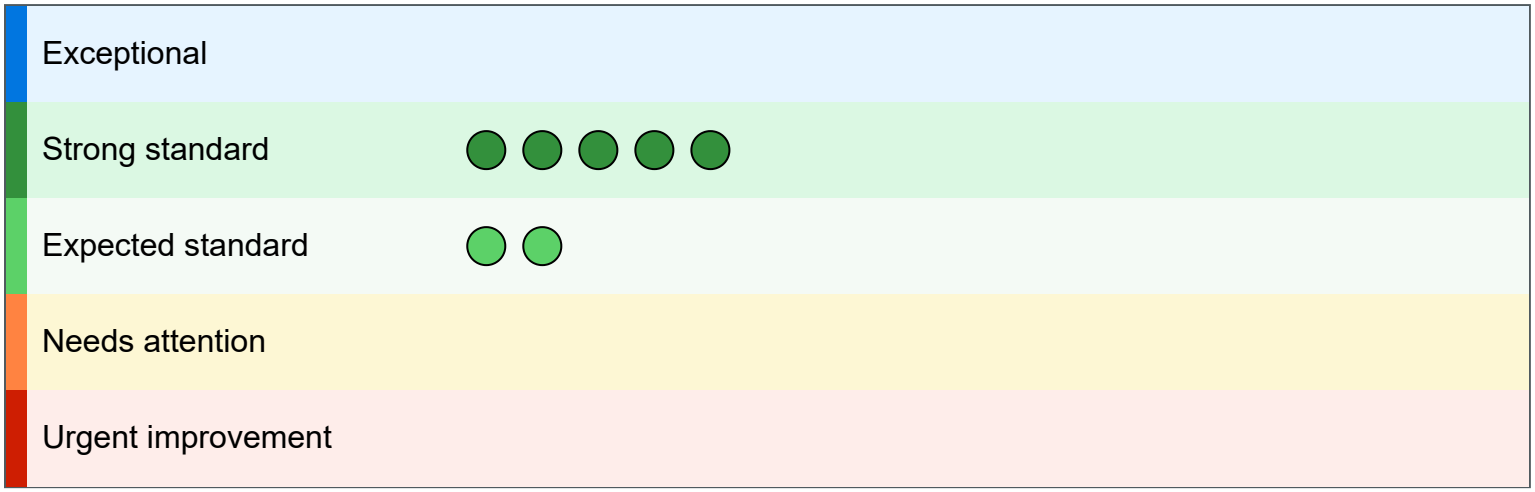
Peterhouse School

Address: Preston New Road, Churchtown, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 8PA

Unique reference number (URN): 133748

Inspection report: 21 April 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

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders manage attendance thoughtfully and carefully. Leaders work closely with families to understand and reduce barriers to attendance, particularly for pupils who have found attending school difficult in the past. Daily checks, prompt follow-up and consistently personalised support help pupils feel confident about coming to school. Leaders track attendance patterns closely and use this information to adapt support, ensuring that pupils who need additional help are identified quickly. Many pupils show notable improvement in attendance over time.

Behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Pupils move safely around the site and settle quickly in lessons. Staff understand pupils' needs and respond consistently, helping pupils regulate emotions and return to learning when difficulties arise. Quiet spaces and personalised approaches support pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they are worried. Bullying is rare and addressed promptly. Relationships are respectful, and expectations are clear. Post-16 students act as positive role models for younger pupils. Consistent high standards of behaviour supports pupils' learning and wellbeing across the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders identify, assess and meet pupils' needs promptly and accurately. Pupils are known well as individuals, and leaders respond quickly when needs change. This reduces barriers to learning and wellbeing and ensures support remains relevant and effective. Pupils benefit from a range of well-chosen support programmes and therapeutic support, such as speech and language or emotional support. These support programmes are shaped through ongoing review and close partnership with families and external professionals.

Staff demonstrate secure knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly autism. Staff make thoughtful changes to classrooms, routines and resources across the school. These adjustments to environments, routines and resources help support pupils to feel secure, access learning and develop independence.

Disadvantaged pupils, including those known to children's social care, are well supported. Leaders work closely with relevant agencies to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupil premium funding enhances academic, emotional and social support, helping pupils to make progress and prepare for future learning. Pupils feel valued and supported well.

The school's flexible education offer provides valuable support for pupils and their families, particularly where pupils have experienced difficulty attending or engaging with school. This provision is carefully tailored and responsive, helping pupils rebuild confidence, re-establish routines and increase their engagement with learning. For many pupils, this flexible approach supports a successful transition into full-time attendance and ongoing and regular involvement in school life.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders and those responsible for governance share a clear purpose centred on pupils' welfare, learning and inclusion. Leaders understand the school's strengths and priorities well and make decisions that reflect pupils' best interests. Their work is informed by a detailed understanding of pupils' needs and the experiences of families whose children have previously found education difficult.

There has been rapid improvement in curriculum design and teaching. Leaders have clarified expectations, strengthened curriculum structures and supported staff through focused professional learning. These changes are improving consistency in pupils' experiences and helping more pupils re-engage with learning. Leaders know where further work is needed to ensure recent improvements are sustained and are taking appropriate action to address this.

Leaders prioritise partnership with parents and carers. Families feel listened to, supported and included as part of their child's education. Parents describe increased confidence in the school's ability to meet their child's needs and report clear improvements in pupils' curiosity, communication, independence and engagement with learning. Leaders' autism-informed approach, alongside the dedication and care shown by staff, helps rebuild trust for families who have experienced difficulties with education in the past.

Professional learning is aligned to pupils' needs, inclusive practice and wellbeing. Leaders are attentive to staff workload and support staff to focus on what matters most for pupils. Governors and trustees know the school well and meet their statutory responsibilities. They provide appropriate challenge and support and scrutinise leaders' work closely. Collaborative relationships with families, professionals and external agencies contribute to a shared sense of responsibility and confidence in the school's direction.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a personal development and wellbeing programme that reflects pupils' needs and experiences. Pupils learn about relationships, staying safe online and offline, and making informed choices about their health and wellbeing. Teaching is carefully adapted so that pupils can understand key messages and revisit them as needed. This helps pupils develop increasing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and manage everyday situations with confidence.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that support their social, emotional and cultural development. Visits to places such as museums and mosques help pupils learn about different beliefs and communities, supporting respect and understanding. Practical activities and enrichment opportunities encourage pupils to work together, take turns and build positive relationships. These experiences help pupils develop confidence and resilience over time.

Pastoral support is a central part of school life. Staff know pupils well and provide consistent, caring support when pupils experience worry or emotional difficulty. Pupils benefit from therapeutic provision, including art, music and drama, which helps them express feelings and develop strategies to manage emotions. Leaders work closely with

specialist professionals, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and educational psychologists, to ensure support continues to meet pupils' needs effectively.

Preparing pupils for adulthood is a clear focus of the school. Pupils take part in practical learning opportunities such as shopping, community visits and work-related experiences that help build independence. Staff deliver careers education through meaningful activities, including careers events where pupils meet people from different occupations. Older pupils receive effective guidance that reflects their interests and strengths, helping them understand the options available and feel increasingly prepared for their next steps.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a post-16 study programme that reflects students' strengths, interests and aspirations. Study programmes are personalised and flexible, enabling students to access a combination of academic, vocational and functional learning pathways. This includes opportunities to work towards functional skills, employability awards and other accredited learning that supports students' next steps.

Teaching in the post-16 provision is calm, structured and responsive. Consistent routines help students feel secure and ready to learn. Staff check what students know and can do over time and provide individual support where learning has previously been disrupted. This helps students re-engage with education and build confidence in their abilities well.

Developing independence is a clear focus of post-16 provision. Students practise practical life skills such as independent travel, managing money and communicating in real-life situations. Community visits and work-related learning help students understand expectations beyond school and apply their skills in meaningful contexts. These experiences support students to develop confidence, responsibility and resilience.

Careers education and guidance are personalised and relevant. Students explore possible pathways through employer encounters, practical experiences and guidance matched to their interests and starting points. Staff work closely with students and their families to plan transitions beyond post-16 education. Leaders monitor destinations carefully and ensure students move on to appropriate education, training or supported employment routes, helping them feel prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils make progress from often very low and disrupted starting points. Many have experienced interrupted education or prolonged absence prior to joining the school. Leaders and staff understand these backgrounds well and adapt provision carefully so pupils can re-engage with learning.

Over time, pupils develop knowledge and skills across subjects and increase their confidence as learners. Where appropriate, pupils achieve accredited qualifications that

reflect their pathways, interests and aspirations. These outcomes support pupils' next steps in education, training or employment.

Leaders monitor individual progress closely and intervene quickly when pupils require additional support. Pupils with special educational needs and other vulnerabilities receive targeted help that reduces barriers to learning. While progress is evident, leaders know that approaches to checking learning need to be used more consistently so that pupils' academic progress from their starting points can be seen clearly across all areas of the curriculum.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have established a curriculum that reflects pupils' needs, interests and starting points. It balances academic learning with the development of communication, independence and life skills. Curriculum pathways are flexible, allowing pupils to access learning that is closely matched to their needs while maintaining breadth and ambition. Learning is carefully planned so pupils build knowledge and skills step by step over time.

Teaching is typically calm and structured. Staff explain learning clearly and break content into manageable steps. Pupils benefit from increasingly consistent approaches, adapted resources and clear routines. Staff support pupils' communication needs through visual supports, sensory resources and practical activities. Reading and communication are prioritised, with staff modelling vocabulary carefully to support understanding.

Leaders have made rapid changes to strengthen curriculum design and expectations for teaching. Generally, these actions are improving consistency across classes and supporting pupils to engage more securely with learning. Furthermore, leaders know which aspects of teaching are developing as intended and where further refinement is needed.

Teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons, but practice varies across subjects. Leaders are working with staff to improve consistency and strengthen how assessment information is used to identify gaps in learning and support the ongoing development of teaching. Leaders recognise that embedding these approaches more securely will help staff match teaching more precisely to pupils' starting points and support progress across all curriculum areas.

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

Pupils arrive to a calm and welcoming school where daily routines are clear and familiar and where staff know them well. This helps pupils feel safe and ready to begin their day. Adults model respectful and patient behaviour, and pupils respond positively, learning to manage interactions with increasing confidence. When pupils feel anxious or unsettled, staff support them well to recognise their emotions. Staff use strategies that help pupils manage their feelings and settle back into learning effectively.

Pupils feel that they belong. They form friendships, look after one another and describe the school as consistent and fair. Bullying is very rare, and pupils trust adults to address any

concerns promptly and sensitively. This helps pupils feel protected and valued within the school community.

Pupils' attendance shows that they enjoy coming to school. Many pupils attend more regularly than they have in the past, especially those with previous negative experiences of education. Pupils engage positively in learning, particularly where activities are practical and hands-on. Teachers adapt learning carefully so pupils can take part meaningfully. Over time, pupils make progress from the levels they were working at when they joined the school, including in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. This is evident in pupils' work, classroom learning and nationally recognised qualifications, where appropriate.

Pupils value the wider opportunities available to them. Many look forward to residential visits, which they talk about with excitement and pride. These experiences help pupils practise independence, develop confidence and build relationships in unfamiliar settings. Pupils also feel that their views matter. Through the school council, they help shape aspects of school life, including enrichment activities. Pupils recognise that their ideas lead to real changes, which further strengthens their sense of belonging. Students in the post-16 provision describe feeling more confident as they develop independence through travel training, managing money and work-related experiences, helping them feel prepared for what comes next.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop teachers' expertise, when using assessments, to check and address misconceptions in pupils' understanding consistently.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sarah Greer.

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 senior leaders, governors, pupils and staff 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 school provides education for pupils with autism spectrum disorder aged five to 19.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Places are commissioned by local authorities.

Leaders are responsible for a flexible education programme. Places are commissioned by local authorities. At the time of the inspection, 10 pupils were part of this provision.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher : Calvin Wallace

Lead inspector:
Rebecca Sharples, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Gary Anders, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

69

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

80

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)

37.93%

What does this mean?

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

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

98.55%

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

1.45%

What does this mean?

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

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).

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).

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
2023 leavers (provisional)	100%
2022 leavers (revised)	S
2021 leavers (revised)	100%

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 (2 term)	26.5%
2023/24 (3 term)	23.1%
2022/23 (3 term)	22.2%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	44.2%
2023/24 (3 term)	47.2%
2022/23 (3 term)	45.3%

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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