

Chelmondiston Church of England Primary School

Address: Woodlands, IP9 1DT

Unique reference number (URN): 144625

Inspection report: 6 January 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils typically attain above national averages at key assessment points, for example in the end of key stage 2 tests, the Year 4 multiplication check and the Year 1 phonics check. Many pupils enter the school at non-standard entry points. These pupils are supported well to make rapid progress through the curriculum and catch up where needed.

Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education, with well-embedded reading, writing and mathematics skills. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well, particularly so in reading.

Pupils' written work is of a high standard across the curriculum. They have excellent recall and understanding of what they have been taught. They develop an effective use of spoken language as a result of the high focus on correct language from the start.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend school very frequently. Leaders monitor absences carefully and work closely with individual families to support them where pupils have struggled to attend school. This generally results in improved attendance.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. There is very rarely any low-level disruption. Pupils know when to stop and listen using quiet signals from teachers. Children learn to work independently from a very early age. For example, Year 1 independently investigated different materials while the teacher worked with Reception children on vocabulary around ice, then Reception were able to continue their play independently while Year 1 had teacher input. The support for pupils who struggle with their behaviour is targeted and helpful. This approach has produced extremely positive results in some pupils' attitudes towards learning and ability to be part of the same classroom as peers.

Pupils' excellent behaviour is because of the high emphasis on personal development that is woven throughout all that the school does. Pupils are expected to listen to others, to respect their ideas, and they do. They are taught to collaborate and cooperate. The school is an environment where no form of discrimination is accepted.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have ensured that the school has a well-considered curriculum, which they regularly revisit. Teachers are highly skilled at ensuring that different ages and abilities within a class have the appropriate challenge and new learning builds on what has come before. They make careful adaptations where pupils have gaps, enabling them to catch up. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of reading. Consequently, pupils recollect what they have been taught successfully.

The curriculum is delivered to a high standard. The school has established ways for pupils to collaborate with each other, for example different ways to work with partners. They are active in their learning, moving around the classroom to work with others or to share ideas. Outdoor learning is a core part of the curriculum and pupils of all ages are challenged by this.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and make highly effective choices about what to teach and how to do this. Consistent high-quality resources enable pupils to revisit previous learning, learn new knowledge and apply their learning in writing in subjects such as history and geography. There is a high focus on speaking and vocabulary.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children start reading and writing from the very start of Reception and consequently are well prepared for Year 1 with secure phonics knowledge. Most children achieve the early learning goals.

Staff are highly aware of the individual needs of the children in their care and proactively seek out opportunities to develop the particular skills of individual children. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Children are highly engaged in learning and choose to repeat teacher-led activities, for example singing and moving objects to repeat the 'Five Little Speckled Frog' song.

Adults have very positive interactions with the children. They extend the children's vocabulary and ask questions such as 'why would the elephant not live on the ice?'. As elsewhere in the school, a focus on vocabulary and oracy means that children have high-quality language modelled to them by peers and adults. This ensures that children develop a wide vocabulary ready for the next stage.

Children learn to be highly independent and follow the school's clear routines, which support them to learn well right from the start. Staff have positive relations with families. Children enjoy sharing photos of interests out of school with their peers.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. The forensic attention to identifying and addressing any gaps in previous learning and barriers to learning means that pupils achieve well. Staff work closely together to help pupils catch up and keep up. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and those known to children's social care. The use of pupil premium funding has a high impact. For example, over the last three years, all pupils classed as disadvantaged have met the expected standard or above in reading at the end of Year 6.

Adaptations are well considered. This includes planned interventions, adapted work and 'in the moment' changes. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others and become just as knowledgeable about learning as peers.

Leaders regularly monitor and discuss the progress through the curriculum of individual pupils. Staff make swift and carefully considered changes to provision where needed.

Staff are well trained in how to make their teaching inclusive. They work very closely with both families and external professionals to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths in the school and are passionate to continue to improve. They actively identify any areas of provision that may need addressing and work quickly and supportively to improve these. This is always led by the best interests of the pupils.

Staff feel highly valued and supported by leaders. Leaders are very visible around the school, and this enables them to monitor in detail the provision in place for pupils. Teachers' workload is kept manageable.

Staff lead their own self-development and seek out professional learning opportunities. There is a comprehensive, evidence-led professional development programme that is impactful and creates opportunities for staff to plan how to use what they have learned. This is then followed up with actions in classrooms and monitored for effectiveness in a positive way by leaders.

The local governing body is highly focused on providing challenge and support to the leaders within the school. They have provided robust challenge, particularly around the use of funding to create the best outcomes for all pupils. They, together with the wider trustee body, fulfil their statutory duties well.

Multi-academy trust leaders work closely with the school and know staff and pupils well. This enables a highly effective open culture to prioritise next steps for whole-school improvement. The school clearly has its own identity, but benefits from the wider community of the trust.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. They are confident, resilient and mature in their attitudes to learning and the rest of the school. Pupils understand the school's values and fundamental British values and demonstrate this in their behaviour, for example respect for others and for their school community. They are caring, for example they look after others, making sure they are alright at playtime. They enjoy playing together, for example making patterns in the snow together.

Older pupils organise their own events and fundraising opportunities. The school has ensured that the core curriculum is diverse, exposes pupils to different cultures and enriches pupils' life experiences. It goes well beyond the national curriculum, with many opportunities to be active and healthy. The personal, social and health education curriculum, including relationships education, is well taught. As a result, pupils have an extensive understanding of topics such as online and offline safety. All of this includes those pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who are disadvantaged. They are highly tolerant of difference and welcoming to all who join their school.

Pupils' environmental understanding is particularly well developed. The school has a close affinity with the local river leading down to the estuary, with all their classes named after traditional barges. They regularly visit the local beach and undertake activities to help support the local community. They sail on the river, and all pupils from Year 1 have swimming lessons every year so that they are safe around water. They value nature and have built a variety of bug hotels, including for the field's resident stag beetles.

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

This is a school where pupils flourish and thrive, both socially and academically. Pupils love learning. They come to school in the morning eager to get going with their learning. They talk with enthusiasm about the different topics they have considered. Children in the early years are excited to discover new things, for example working diligently as a team to explore frozen ice and how to get it to melt. Pupils have lots of opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. For example, environmental learning activities often incorporate field studies at the local river. Pupils support the local community, for example undertaking beach cleans. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils achieve well. Many pupils enter the school throughout the school year. These pupils also make accelerated progress through the curriculum so that most are highly ready for moving on to secondary school. The staff spend considerable time getting to know individual pupils and addressing any barriers that they may have. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who may be disadvantaged.

The school is a close-knit community and pupils look out for others. They enjoy the many responsibilities they have, including the buddy system, where Year 5 get to know and help out with Reception, for example on walks to the local church. The school's approach to personal development is woven throughout all they do. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect and tolerance for others. Everyone is welcome and included in pupils' play.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. There are clear routines in place that mean pupils know what is expected at all times. Pupils know that they are safe and have trusted adults they can talk to if they have any problems. Bullying is very rare. Pupils' attendance to school is very positive.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-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, Tracey Caffull, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bilt.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, multi-academy leaders, governors, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian (Church of England) religious character. The last section 48 inspection was in September 2021, and the next is due in the academic year 2026/2027.

The school uses no alternative provision.

At the time of the inspection, there were 117 pupils on roll.

Headteacher : Lesley Etchingham

Lead inspector:

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Robert James, 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

124

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: 272

School capacity

140

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)

20.97%

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: 26.3%

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

1.61%

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

10.48%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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

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	68%	61%	Above
2024/25	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	75%	61%	Above
2022/23	67%	60%	Close to average

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	93%	74%	Above
2024/25	96%	75%	Above
2023/24	90%	74%	Above
2022/23	93%	73%	Above

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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	72%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	80%	72%	Above
2022/23	80%	71%	Above

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	88%	73%	Above
2024/25	88%	74%	Above
2023/24	90%	73%	Above
2022/23	87%	73%	Above

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	60%	46%	Above
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23	S	44%	S

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	100%	62%	Above
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	S	62%	S
2022/23	S	60%	S

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	80%	59%	Above
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	S	58%	S
2022/23	S	58%	S

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	70%	60%	Above
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24	S	59%	S
2022/23	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	60%	68%	-8 pp
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24	S	67%	S
2022/23	S	66%	S

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	100%	80%	20 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	S	78%	S

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	80%	78%	2 pp
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	S	78%	S
2022/23	S	77%	S

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	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	79%	S
2022/23	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 (2 terms)	3.9%	5.2%	Below
2023/24	3.8%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.6%	5.9%	Below

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 (2 terms)	6.9%	13.3%	Below
2023/24	5.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	8.7%	16.2%	Below

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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