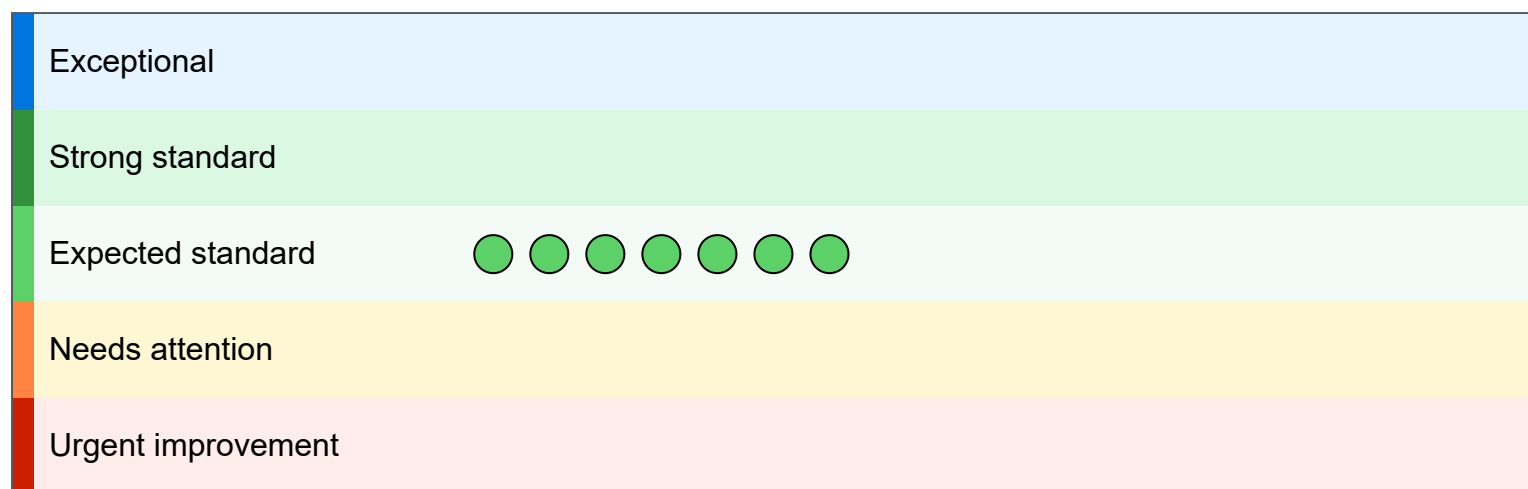


# Wells Hall Primary School

**Address:** Wells Hall Road, Great Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 0NH

**Unique reference number (URN):** 144218

## Inspection report: 20 January 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 

Pupils achieve well in national assessments of reading, writing and mathematics. In most cases, this is close to average. This includes disadvantaged pupils, who typically achieve above their national counterparts. Pupils' work is also of an age-appropriate standard across these subjects. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is not yet where leaders want it to be. However, the school has taken decisive action to improve these outcomes. Pupils who fall behind catch up quickly and typically achieve in line with national by the end of Year 6.

Pupils across the school generally achieve well in wider curriculum subjects. Where knowledge is taught explicitly, pupils learn particularly well. They retain and articulate their learning clearly, demonstrating an expanding depth of knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to achieve from their starting points due to well-informed adaptations.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school has worked effectively to improve pupils' attendance rates across the school. Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming place for pupils and their families. Leaders recognised that attendance was a barrier to pupils achieving well. They have taken a caring and supportive approach to helping pupils attend more regularly. This has had the desired impact. Attendance rates are improving year on year. Fewer pupils are persistently absent from school. Overall, pupils' attendance across the school, including for disadvantaged pupils, is now close to average.

There are clear and consistent expectations set by adults about how pupils should behave in and around school. The recently introduced 'Wells Hall Way' has provided staff with well-considered ways to manage behaviour consistently. For example, the way pupils enter classrooms from the playground is clear and consistent. Pupils know what adults expect and typically meet these expectations. Pupils' attitudes to learning are developing well. While many pupils demonstrate well-established learning behaviours, a few require further support and modelling to ensure that their behaviour remains focused and supports their learning. In many cases, learning proceeds without disruption.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Teachers are supported by a carefully considered and ambitious curriculum, which spans different subjects. It starts well in early years and sets out the knowledge pupils are intended to learn year on year. This helps teachers know what to teach and when and it supports leaders' agreed approach to teaching across the school. Leaders recognise where teaching is successful as well as where practice needs further development.

Leaders make sure that staff have a clear focus on teaching pupils the most important knowledge first, such as counting, and recognising letters and sounds. Leaders have also rightly focused on ensuring that their early reading curriculum is taught well. Leaders'

focused work on staff introducing a new approach, supported by comprehensive training, means phonics is taught consistently well. Pupils receive clearly delivered daily phonics sessions and their progress through the curriculum is checked carefully. Any pupil at risk of falling behind is supported to keep up or catch up with their peers.

Leaders provide access to training that enables teachers to typically teach the wider curriculum as leaders intend. Teachers usually explain ideas clearly and demonstrate suitable subject knowledge in their explanations during lessons. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for. Suitable adaptations are made, such as the skilful use of technology, enabling these pupils to be taught effectively in class alongside their peers. However, on occasion, teaching does not move pupils on in their learning as well as they might. Sometimes opportunities to further support or challenge pupils in lessons are missed. Sometimes teachers do not have the confidence to adapt learning in lessons as effectively as they could.

## Early years

Expected standard 

From the get-go, staff build and value the warm relationships they establish with families. They work closely with parents and carers and engage with external agencies to secure additional support for children when required. Relationships between staff and children are warm and nurturing. Children, including disadvantaged children, settle quickly.

The early years foundation stage curriculum is ambitious and well organised. Staff build children's knowledge and skills deliberately across both Nursery and Reception. There is a clear focus on language and vocabulary woven through teaching of the different areas of learning. Most children acquire the skills they need. However, on occasion, staff do not step in as effectively as they might to draw children into purposeful conversations. This means a small number of opportunities are missed to deepen children's learning and strengthen their communication skills further.

Leaders make sure that early reading and phonics are a priority. Children are immersed in books and stories. For example, they complete activities based around fairy tales, such as 'The Three Little Pigs' through a range of practical, hands-on experiences. Once children begin their Reception Year, they learn phonics straight away. Staff deliver this effectively. They help children learn the sounds and letters they need to develop their early reading and writing skills. There are planned opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their learning throughout the school day. Targeted support helps children who need additional help. As a result, children typically make a strong start to their learning. They are well prepared for Year 1 and beyond.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff are approachable and are a constant source of care and support for pupils and their families, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently strengthened the way that they and staff identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Stronger ways of working mean that pupils' needs are accurately identified. Staff clearly identify, such as in individual plans for pupils, how to break down barriers to pupils' learning. Staff are increasingly effective at implementing these plans to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

The Willows special educational needs unit provides a safe and suitable learning environment for pupils who need a more individual support. These pupils progress well from their individual starting points due to leaders' well-considered curriculum and staff's expertise.

The school actively engages with external agencies to secure the support that pupils require. Leaders communicate regularly and contribute fully to the learning of pupils who access some of their education elsewhere. They are highly committed to every pupil's success.

Pupil premium funding is used thoughtfully to involve disadvantaged pupils in all aspects of school life. No pupil misses out on wider opportunities. The school's work with vulnerable families is particularly impressive. Families are welcomed into school life. For example, families are warmly invited into school each week to cook meals together.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

School and trust leaders show real ambition for the school. They are proud of what the school does well but are equally ambitious for what it can become. Those responsible for governance also know the school well. They are fully invested in school life and share leaders' aspirations. Governors and trustees skilfully balance the support and challenge they provide to school leaders.

Leaders have placed the school on a positive trajectory, with steady improvements being made. The necessary refinements and developments are being implemented to ensure that the school continues to improve in line with leaders' ambitions. Leaders' work to develop the 'Wells Hall Way' is an example of recent refinements. This is having a clear impact on reducing low-level behaviours and supporting stronger attendance. Work on the curriculum and teaching is ongoing. For example, leaders recognise the need for greater consistency and for further improvements in pupils' early reading achievement.

The professional learning staff receive is comprehensive and well targeted. Teachers are being trained to teach in a clear and consistent way, with further training planned to strengthen this further. Staff appreciate the commitment to their development, but they also know that leaders care about their workload and wellbeing. This creates a cohesive and shared approach to improvement.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Most welcome the caring nature of the school. They appreciate that they are a valued part of the school community.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

The school's wellbeing offer is strong. The trained pastoral team work relentlessly to support the wellbeing of pupils and their families. The school offers a wide range of internal and external support to ensure that pupils are in school and are ready to learn.

Leaders have developed a clear approach to supporting pupils' personal development. Trips and visits enhance and enrich the curriculum, while outdoor learning provides pupils with

meaningful experiences beyond the classroom. Leaders are keen to develop this offer further so that it has an even greater impact on pupils' wider knowledge and skills.

Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which they value and enjoy. Leaders track participation carefully, ensuring that any disadvantaged pupils and other pupils who may not access such opportunities outside school are targeted to benefit from this offer. The school performs exceptionally well in sport and has received awards in recognition of this, while music opportunities for pupils are also plentiful.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is clear. It covers all statutory requirements. Pupils are able to talk about their learning in PSHE, particularly areas they have studied more recently. For example, they have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online.

The school considers carefully how its curriculum represents people from a wide range of groups and has made meaningful links with schools in other nations. This focus on diversity is evident in curriculum work. For example, a recent lesson comparing the religions of Sikhism and Hinduism led to meaningful discussion about similarities and differences between people. This focus enables pupils to be respectful and tolerant of peoples' differences. Overall, the comprehensive personal development curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

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

There is a strong sense of belonging at this happy, inclusive school. Leaders and staff are ambitious and want the very best for pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm. Pupils are greeted kindly each morning as they enter school. They enter calmly and start the day well. The school provides support to pupils and families to make school a place where pupils feel safe, secure and happy. Pupils' attendance has improved positively over time.

Pupils benefit from a rich and broad curriculum and most pupils develop strong learning behaviours. Pupils talk positively about the exciting learning they study across different subjects. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, typically achieve well across the curriculum and are suitably prepared for secondary school.

The way pupils behave in and around school is positive. Bullying is rare, and pupils have every confidence in staff to manage it effectively. Classrooms are typically calm and orderly. Pupils get along well with each other and enjoy the opportunities they have to learn the curriculum. Playtime is a hive of positive activity, with ball games taking place successfully while the calm zone gives pupils the chance to sit down and play a game with their peers. There is something for everyone to do.

Pupil leaders play an active role in school life. Older pupils act as excellent role models in taking on these responsibilities. 'Reading Champions' hear younger pupils read, while play leaders organise games for pupils to play together happily. The school council has an active

and meaningful voice in school life and revels in the chance to represent the school more widely as part of the trust council.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine and develop the support teachers receive to help them adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of some pupils in class.
  - Leaders should further develop conditions for learning in the early years to ensure that all staff interact with children in a meaningful way to extend and develop their vocabulary and communication skills.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Unity Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dominic Norrish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Quinn.

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 a range of school leaders, members of the local governing body, the CEO, the executive director of education and the chair of trustees during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with staff, parents and carers and pupils during the inspection.

The headteacher was absent from school at the time of the inspection.

The school includes provision for 12 pupils who have severe learning disabilities.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 1 that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Benjamin Jeffrey

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### Lead inspector:

Jonny Wallace, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Neil Taggart, Ofsted Inspector

Jennifer Brassington, Ofsted Inspector

Joseph Figg, 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 20 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**491**

Well above 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

**520**

Well above 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)

**20.88%**

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**

**1.63%**

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**

**14.66%**

Close to 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)**

**SEN unit**

### **What does this mean?**

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

## **Type of specialist provision (if applicable)**

# OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	65%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	60%	Above

### 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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	81%	72%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	78%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	83%	72%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	83%	71%	Above

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	76%	73%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	77%	74%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	75%	73%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	78%	73%	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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	54%	46%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	63%	47%	Above

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	41%	46%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	59%	44%	Above

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	70%	62%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	75%	63%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	65%	62%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	71%	60%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	78%	59%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	81%	59%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	71%	58%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	82%	58%	Above

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	60%	60%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	69%	61%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	53%	59%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	59%	59%	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 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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	54%	68%	-14 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	63%	69%	-7 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	41%	67%	-26 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	59%	66%	-8 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	70%	80%	-10 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	75%	81%	-6 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	65%	80%	-15 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	71%	78%	-8 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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	78%	78%	0 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	81%	78%	3 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	71%	78%	-7 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	82%	77%	5 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	60%	80%	-20 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	69%	81%	-12 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	53%	79%	-26 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	59%	79%	-20 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 (2 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

### 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 term)	12.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.4%	16.2%	Close to average

## 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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