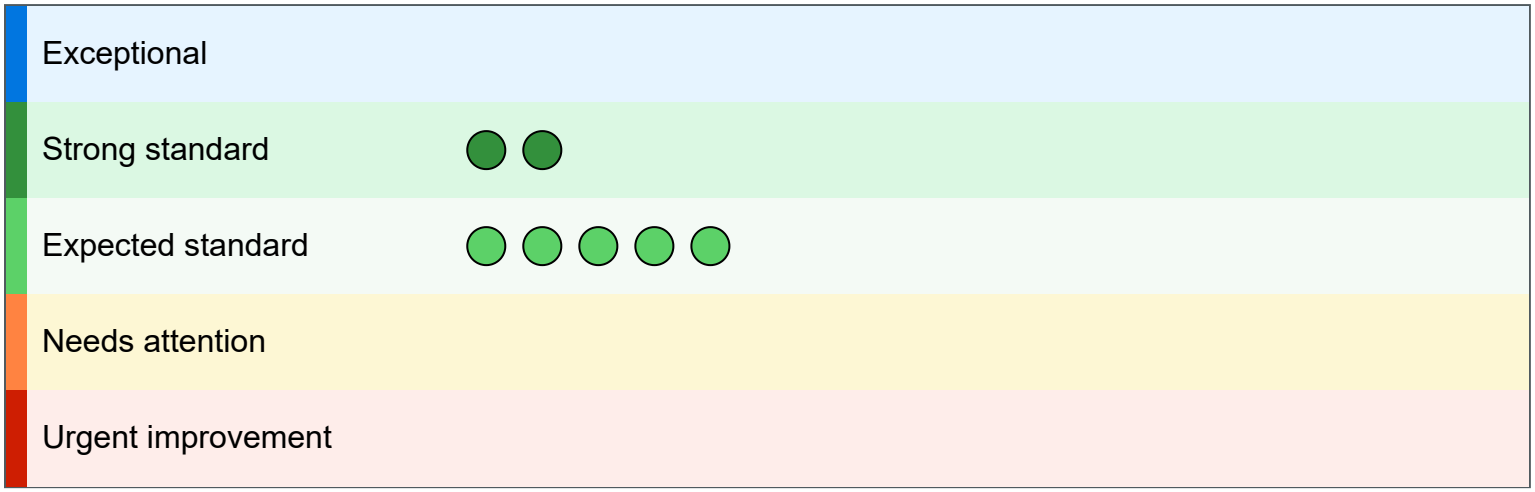
Great Baddow High School

Address: Duffield Road, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9RZ

Unique reference number (URN): 136904

Inspection report: 24 March 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 demonstrate a rigorous and highly-structured approach to improve the rate of pupil attendance. They have established clear systems, strong routines and detailed analysis of attendance data to underpin this approach. Overall, pupils' attendance is above national and local averages.

Leaders use a wide range of strategies to reduce barriers to attendance, particularly for vulnerable pupils. These include the use of the inclusion hub and a targeted attendance hub. Leaders engage regularly with parents and carers through calls, visits and early intervention processes. They are proactive in their approach to support. Leaders have established a culture where attendance is a priority and understood by pupils. Staff reinforce this with consistent messaging, rewards and tutor-based interventions.

The dignified behaviour of pupils is a notable feature of this school. Despite its large size, leaders have successfully created a supportive community where pupils respect and care for one another. Pupils have a deep understanding of responsibility and citizenship. Social times and movement around the site are civilised affairs.

Pupils' engagement with their learning is consistently high in lessons. Pupils are focused, motivated and responsive to teacher direction. Disruption is minimal. The calm and purposeful atmosphere, alongside positive pupil voice, creates a well-established culture of high expectations.

Pupils know and understand that bullying is not tolerated. This includes discrimination and online abuse. Such incidents when they occur are not typically repeated. This is due to the school’s robust systems and the support that pupils receive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Pupils’ personal development is a clear strength of the school’s provision. Pupils articulate a detailed understanding of key themes. These include how to have healthy relationships, be safe, and live life in a modern Britain underpinned by fundamental British values. This is achieved through the ‘lessons for life’ curriculum. This curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced and relevant to pupils’ experiences. It addresses complex issues in an age-appropriate way. Relationships and sex education (RSE) is sensitively delivered, for example older girls appreciated the recent input on female safety issues.

The school has taken steps to address inequalities in pupils' access to wider experiences. Pupils build their knowledge of culture and understanding of the world through deliberately-planned enrichment activities. This is most beneficial for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have full access to the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Many participate due to the bespoke support they receive. Additionally, deaf pupils in the specially-resourced provision benefit from the opportunities the school provides to them which other pupils can join in with. For example, the signing choir. Overall, the inclusive environment cultivates a tangible sense of belonging.

Pupils enthusiastically lead the school’s five ambassador groups which promote race and ethnicity, religion and beliefs, disability and accessibility, sexuality and pride, gender and equality. Sixth-form students, in particular, demonstrate a mature understanding of their role within the school community. They value opportunities to mentor younger pupils and contribute meaningfully.

Pupils and students receive helpful careers information, education, advice and guidance. This is because the school's careers programme is comprehensive and well taught. As a result, pupils and sixth-form students are confident about their next steps and preparation for adulthood.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Over time, the school has typically performed in line with national expectations. Recent outcomes show more pupils achieve a good pass at GCSE. While, in the past, there have been variances in disadvantaged pupils’ performance, the school is now successfully improving outcomes for this group of pupils. Most pupils in receipt of an education, health and care plan work successfully towards their targets.

Pupils’ current work demonstrates they are acquiring the knowledge and skills they need for their future examinations. For example, pupils in key stage 3 articulate clearly what they are learning and why they are learning it. Pupils typically write accurately and at length. Pupils who are in receipt of support for their handwriting are making the gains they need for future success. This is also the case for those who receive support with their reading.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum is broad, balanced and thoughtfully constructed, with a clear emphasis on key stage 3 as a foundation for future learning. For example, leaders have deliberately widened their vocational offer of qualifications. This is with the aim of meeting local employers' needs. The curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics, is coherently planned and sequenced, with careful attention to how knowledge builds over time. This is evident in the way staff skilfully teach complex concepts, such as metaphor and higher-level mathematical problem-solving, to secure understanding and prepare pupils for future learning. However, in a few other subjects it is not as clear what essential knowledge, skills and understanding pupils must master by the end of the unit of learning. This hampers their progression through the curriculum.

Across lessons, pupils show high levels of engagement. Routines are well established. Staff use effective teaching strategies to support pupils’ understanding. This includes making adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Deaf pupils are well supported in lessons. There is close liaison between specialist staff from the specially-resourced provision and subject teachers. Throughout the curriculum, there is emphasis on developing pupils’ reading, vocabulary and their confidence. Teachers have confident

subject knowledge. They spot readily when pupils have gaps in their understanding and intervene, so errors are not repeated.

Inclusion

Expected standard

There is a tangible inclusive ethos in the school. This is due to how well known and looked after pupils are. From the start, leaders and staff swiftly identify pupils' needs, whether they are special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other barriers due to their personal circumstances. There is close liaison with families in relation to this. Pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans, in the specially-resourced provision for pupils with SEND, have specialist support that is appropriate to their needs. There is close adherence to the advice and guidance from specialists and external agencies. Staff receive extensive training on how to support deaf pupils in their lessons successfully. As a result, deaf pupils are in receipt of highly-positive learning experiences. However, the information that staff receive for some pupils with EHC plans in the main school is not as precisely tailored. In spite of this, it is the quality of the teaching that enables these pupils to learn productively.

Leaders have strengthened identification processes for pupils who require reading support. They utilise a range of checks, including that of phonics knowledge, to ascertain the best programme for the individual. Pupils develop their reading skills with momentum. However, leaders do not scrutinise with as much rigor the impact other interventions are having on pupils.

Leaders use the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils with clarity and purpose. They focus upon both pupils' academic outcomes and wider development. Leaders commission alternative provision appropriately and ensure it is used in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and governors have navigated the school thoughtfully through a period of change as the school forms a new trust. Both parties have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors have ensured that during this time of change, they consider workload carefully. For example, leaders take deliberate steps to reduce unnecessary burden. This includes thoughtful calendar planning to avoid clashes and overload, as well as refining data collection processes. While governors have kept a close eye on the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, their scrutiny of the impact of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils has been light touch. Governors are clear that the school is to continue to improve its provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have established a coherent and well-considered professional learning programme that aligns to the school's improvement priorities and is informed by a range of evidence. This includes learning reviews, staff feedback and needs analysis. This ensures that staff professional learning is purposeful and supports improvements in teaching and learning.

Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting staff wellbeing. A positive and open culture is evident, with productive relationships between staff and leaders and an

established open-door approach. Staff feel able to raise concerns, including about bullying or harassment, and know the processes for doing so.

Post 16 provision **Expected standard**

Leaders have ensured that the provision in the sixth form follows government guidance and meets the needs of students. Leaders have accurate knowledge of the strengths and areas for further development within the sixth form. They check closely the quality of provision and have comprehensive knowledge of the students.

The curriculum is appropriately sequenced and taught consistently well. The processes for checking students' progress are robust. Students understand clearly the expectations of the courses they study and how to achieve well in them. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged are well catered for in lessons. They learn productively. Students demonstrate independence in their learning. They are highly motivated to study and understand the importance of additional reading. Students are enthusiastic about the support they receive, both academically and pastorally.

Students achieve in line with the national expectations for A level performance. However, in recent years, students who follow applied courses and advanced technical qualifications have achieved higher than is typical nationally.

The school ensures that sixth-form students have a personalised approach to careers guidance that informs their future choices. For example, leaders link work-related learning to career aspirations. Leaders continue to support students once they have left. Students typically sustain their next placement in education, employment and training.

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

The school is a harmonious community where all pupils feel valued, safe and looked after. Pupils are loyal to the school. They want to achieve well and make the most of the opportunities on offer. Hence, they rarely miss a day of school. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Pupils act with integrity. They make the right decisions when no one is looking, for example pupils encourage their peers when they see them dawdling to lessons. Incidents of bullying are few and far between.

Over time, the school has worked to improve the curriculum and its delivery. This is having impact whereby pupils are achieving better outcomes than they were before. This includes disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are highly motivated in their learning. This results in industrious classrooms where pupils debate, ask challenging questions and show curiosity. Deaf pupils who attend the specially-resourced provision are supported well in their lessons. Alongside their peers, they benefit from wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities, such as 'panathlon' swimming.

Students in the sixth form highly value the experiences and leadership opportunities they have. They see themselves as part of a wider community and feel a responsibility to contribute to it. For example, all Year 12 students run clubs for younger pupils. Of note, is

the support sixth-form students lend to the school's reading scheme for younger pupils. They inspire younger pupils to do well. Sixth-form students appreciate the support of staff, but equally they help each other effectively. For example, they create and share blogs to support the learning of others. Due to a comprehensive programme for the preparation for adulthood, students are independent, aspirational and confident about their next steps in education, employment or training.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the guidance staff receive on supporting pupils with education, health and care plans in the main school is precisely tailored. They should also check more closely that staff follow specialist advice where required.
- Leaders should analyse more closely the impact of the interventions they run. This is so actions for further improvement are precisely targeted to help pupils achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that curriculum endpoints are consistently clear in all subjects. This is so teachers and pupils alike understand the goals pupils are to achieve.
- Leaders should continue their work to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils as well as standards attained by students in A levels in the sixth form.

About this inspection

This school is part of Quantum 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 (CEO), Paul Farmer, who is also the school's headteacher. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Daniel Mayman and Sara Kightley.

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 Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the co-chairs of the trust, the chair of the local governing body and other governor representatives. They spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff members. They also spoke with parents and carers of pupils who attend alternative provision and of pupils who follow part-time timetables. Inspectors spoke with representatives from alternative provision.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a specially-resourced provision for deaf pupils.

The school currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

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.

Since the previous inspection, the school has formed a new trust with 7 primary schools. The headteacher is the trust's new CEO. As a result of this, the school's senior leadership team has been restructured.

Headteacher: Paul Farmer

Lead inspector:
Liz Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rowena Simmons, Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler, Ofsted Inspector
Sufian Sadiq, Ofsted Inspector
Teri-Leigh Jones, Ofsted Inspector
Amy Wright, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,528
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: 1,067

School capacity

1,520

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

18.07%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

3.34%
Close to 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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.44%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

HI - Hearing Impairment

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	55.8%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	46.8%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60.1%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	50.0	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48.1	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53.2	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.03	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.22	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.2%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	8.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	20.0%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	39.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	28.4	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	39.2	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.99	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.24	-0.57	Above

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	37.2%	53.1%	-15.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	8.9%	53.1%	-44.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	20.0%	52.4%	-32.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	39.1	50.4	-11.3
2023/24 (final)	28.4	50.0	-21.6
2022/23 (final)	39.2	50.3	-11.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.99	0.16	-1.16
2022/23 (final)	-0.24	0.17	-0.41

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	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	95%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.98	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.49	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.27	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average

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)	6.7%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.0%	9.0%	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 term)	16.7%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	17.0%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	18.3%	26.5%	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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