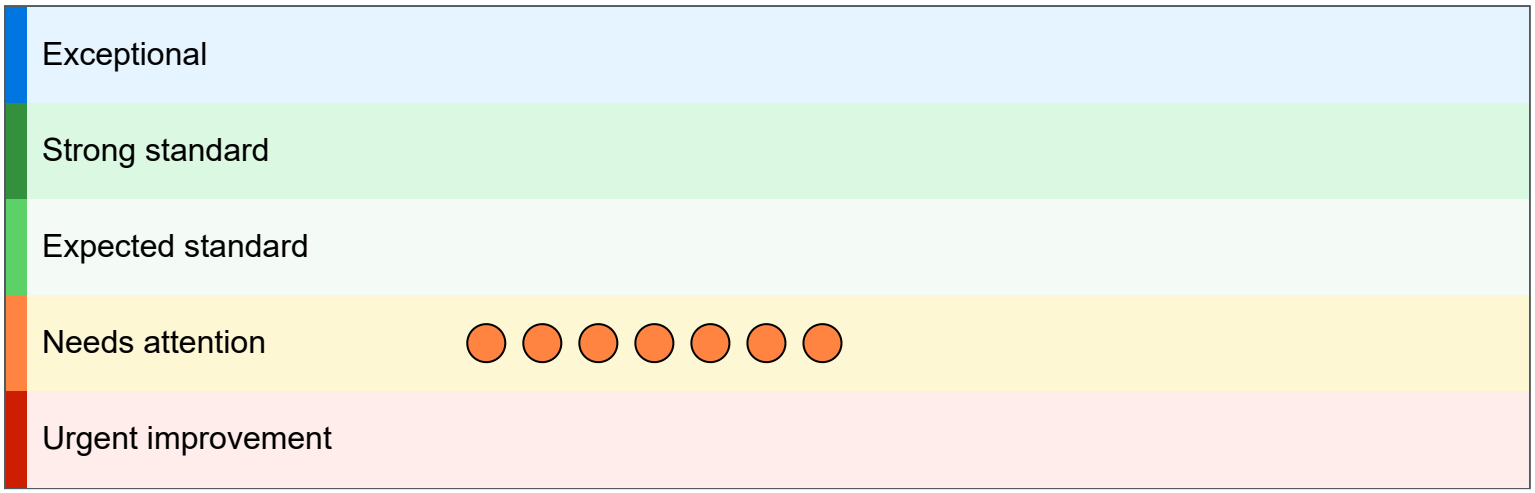
Eastchurch Church of England Primary School

Address: Warden Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4EJ

Unique reference number (URN): 148118

Inspection report: 19 May 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.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Published outcomes have been below national levels over time. Pupils' achievement continues to be an area of focus. This is because improvements to teaching and pupils' learning are recent. Although ambition for pupils has been raised, historic gaps continue to have a negative impact on pupils' achievement, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Appropriate actions to improve achievement are in place. Pupils' attainment and progress through the curriculum is moving in a positive direction. There have been some improvements, particularly in reading at key stage 2.

Many pupils are not well prepared for the next stages of education. They do not remember important learning. This prevents pupils from building knowledge securely. Furthermore, too many pupils make errors in basic grammar and spelling. Sometimes, pupils struggle with handwriting. This means that pupils continue in their learning with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders' actions are beginning to make a difference. However, it is too soon to determine the full impact of this work.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Pupils' attendance is below national averages and has been for some time. This is particularly the case for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, too many pupils miss important learning, which contributes to their underachievement. Leaders have rightly prioritised improving attendance across the school. Leaders now track patterns more closely, communicate more frequently with families and use incentives to encourage regular attendance habits. Staff work proactively with external agencies to address complex cases. This renewed focus is starting to make a difference, but the full impact of leaders' work is not yet evident.

Leaders have significantly strengthened behaviour systems. They have introduced clear values, consistent routines and well-structured approaches that staff apply with increasing confidence. This has created some calm and respectful environments across the school. Pupils with higher levels of need receive more bespoke support, which helps them to focus and re-engage with learning. These developments are improving pupils' attitudes to learning, although this work is ongoing. There is also further work to do to support pupils to have the confidence that they need to continue in their learning when they find things difficult. Leaders take incidents of discrimination and bullying seriously. They ensure that pupils receive the swift support that they need when this occurs.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. However, recent improvements are not fully developed. How well the curriculum is taught varies across the school. Although leaders have a renewed sense of ambition for what pupils should learn, the processes needed to secure this ambition are at an early stage.

Where teaching is less effective, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge in a logical sequence, but pupils do not benefit from it equally. Opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge across subjects are limited. Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding well enough to prevent errors from persisting in their work. Pupils who need extra help in reading and writing are beginning to get the support they need to catch up.

Leaders recognise the need to strengthen curriculum practices. Adaptations for disadvantaged pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not effective in reducing barriers to learning. As a result, these pupils do not access the full curriculum as successfully as they should.

Early years

Needs attention

Leaders are at an early stage of improving the early years and the impact of their work is not yet consistent. The curriculum is well organised and reflects children's stages of development. However, children do not build securely on what they learn in focused sessions when they move into independent play. As a result, children's learning is not deepened. Some children are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they should be.

Staff teach phonics well, helping children begin to read and write with growing confidence. Children feel safe, settle quickly and benefit from caring relationships and well-established routines. Staff prioritise children's communication, language, physical development and their personal, social and emotional needs, which supports children with low starting points. However, inconsistencies in staff's practice mean that some children do not achieve as well as they could. Staff's interactions with children are not always high quality. They sometimes overlook misconceptions in children's knowledge.

Leaders have established care routines across the early years. They are focused on children's wellbeing. Leaders now identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly and put appropriate adaptations in place. There are positive and helpful partnerships with external specialists and with parents and carers. Parents become increasingly confident in supporting their children in their learning.

Inclusion

Needs attention

Although staff know pupils well, the school does not apply a consistent approach to identify, assess and meet pupils' individual needs. Leaders are beginning to reduce barriers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities through more individualised support and adaptations. However, the support for pupils with additional needs is varied. Leaders have recently strengthened their step-by-step approach. Teachers are beginning to assess pupils' additional needs more accurately and put appropriate provision in place sooner. Training is helping staff to use a wider range of strategies, but practice remains uneven.

Leaders are improving systems to monitor pupils' progress and check the impact of support, including the use of additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged. However, leaders'

understanding of how well their actions improve achievement for disadvantaged pupils is still at an early stage. Some support does not have the intended impact. Work with external agencies is becoming more proactive, enabling pupils to access specialist help at the right time. Support for pupils' social and emotional wellbeing is also having a positive effect. Alternative provision is only used when appropriate and is in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

There have been substantial changes to leadership in recent years. Now that this has stabilised, leaders take appropriate action in the right areas. However, the school has also experienced significant turbulence in staffing, which has slowed the pace of improvements. Despite this, leaders have made some meaningful and positive changes. For example, they have improved the curriculum and have secured improvements to pupils' reading attainment in Year 6.

Leaders know what needs to be done for the school to improve. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Improving the consistency in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged is a high priority. Leaders know the community well and serve it with dedication.

Trustees and local governors have a thorough oversight of the school. They understand leaders' actions and provide effective challenge and support as required. Trustees ensure their statutory duties are met. Leaders have put in place a programme of evidence-informed professional learning for staff. Staff value the support they receive and describe leaders as approachable and visible. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and wellbeing, including for those early in their careers. However, training has not consistently led to sustained improvements in classroom practice.

Leaders' and staff's engagement with parents and carers, and the wider community, is positive. However, leaders' work to communicate with and involve parents is not yet effective in order to secure their full confidence in the school's direction of improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

The school's personal development programme has not been implemented consistently. As a result, pupils do not build the knowledge that they need in a systematic way. When taught, the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is ambitious and appropriately sequenced. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge in areas such as online safety and healthy eating. However, older pupils have a limited understanding of many aspects of life in society, including the meaning and purpose of fundamental British values and the different religions and beliefs in modern Britain. Staff do not support pupils to build their deeper understanding over time. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to their learning, have superficial understanding of important knowledge that they need.

Leaders recognise and have begun to address inconsistencies. They are focused on strengthening the personal development offer so that it meets pupils' needs more effectively and has an increased positive impact for them. However, this work is at an early stage.

Leaders generally develop pupils' character appropriately. Typically, pupils now benefit from leaders' high expectations and the opportunities that they provide. For example, in their roles as school and eco-councillors, pupils learn about the importance of listening to each other and caring for the environment.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take part in a range of enrichment activities. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to take part in activities beyond the classroom, including cultural experiences, such as African drumming.

Pupils can access additional wellbeing support when they need it. Leaders and the pastoral team work closely with external agencies to help identify barriers pupils may face. They use this information effectively to provide extra support as necessary.

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

Although pupils at Eastchurch are keen to learn and they enjoy school when they are there, too many miss out on their education because they do not attend regularly. These pupils do not benefit fully from lessons or the wider activities on offer. This affects how well they learn over time.

Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and respond well to the support that staff provide. However, teaching does not consistently help pupils build securely on what they already know, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, some pupils struggle to move on to more complex work. They do not achieve as well as they could. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive the support they need to make progress. There is variability in how well staff adapt teaching in some classes, meaning that some pupils do not access the curriculum in full.

On the whole, pupils behave well around the school. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. Established habits and routines at the beginning of each day support a calm and purposeful start to each morning. Staff greet pupils personally and know them well. Pupils know who to speak to if they have a concern, and staff support them effectively when difficulties, including bullying concerns, arise. Pupils feel cared for and safe. They know that discrimination is not tolerated. Children in the early years settle happily and build confidence from the start.

Generally, pupils benefit from a range of experiences beyond the classroom. These experiences help them develop confidence and begin to understand the wider world. However, some pupils leave school without the knowledge and skills that they need to be well prepared for life in modern Britain and for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should further strengthen their work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce rates of persistent absence to ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance and full access to the curriculum.

- Leaders should ensure that teaching, including in the early years, consistently meets the school's expectations. They should support staff to use appropriate resources, materials and activities so that the aims of the curriculum are realised, and pupils remember more of what they are taught.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils are given the support and practice they need to develop accuracy and fluency in writing, particularly in handwriting, spelling and punctuation, so that pupils write well across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is implemented effectively across the school so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, develop secure knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should build on the school's recent improvements and strategic direction, working in partnership with staff, parents and carers, to further strengthen collaboration to support improved systems and approaches.

About this inspection

This school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Annie Wiles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan Butterworth.

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 the headteacher, school leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives of the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2024.

Headteacher: Sarah Bone

Lead inspector:
Jody Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Jo Hygate, Ofsted Inspector
Harry Ingham, His Majesty's 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

142
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

210
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)

57.38%
Well above 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

1.41%
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

26.76%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

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	36%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	25%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	60%	Below

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	50%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	63%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	73%	Below

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	59%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	71%	Below

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	46%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	73%	Below

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	32%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	33%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	44%	Close to average

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	48%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	Below

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	42%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	48%	58%	Close to average

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	44%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	59%	Below

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	32%	68%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	69%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	67%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 pp

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	48%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	41%	78%	-38 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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	42%	78%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	78%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	29%	78%	-49 pp
2022/23 (final)	48%	77%	-29 pp

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	44%	80%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	44%	79%	-35 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 (3 term)	7.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.9%	5.9%	Above

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 (3 term)	30.6%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	33.8%	16.2%	Above

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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