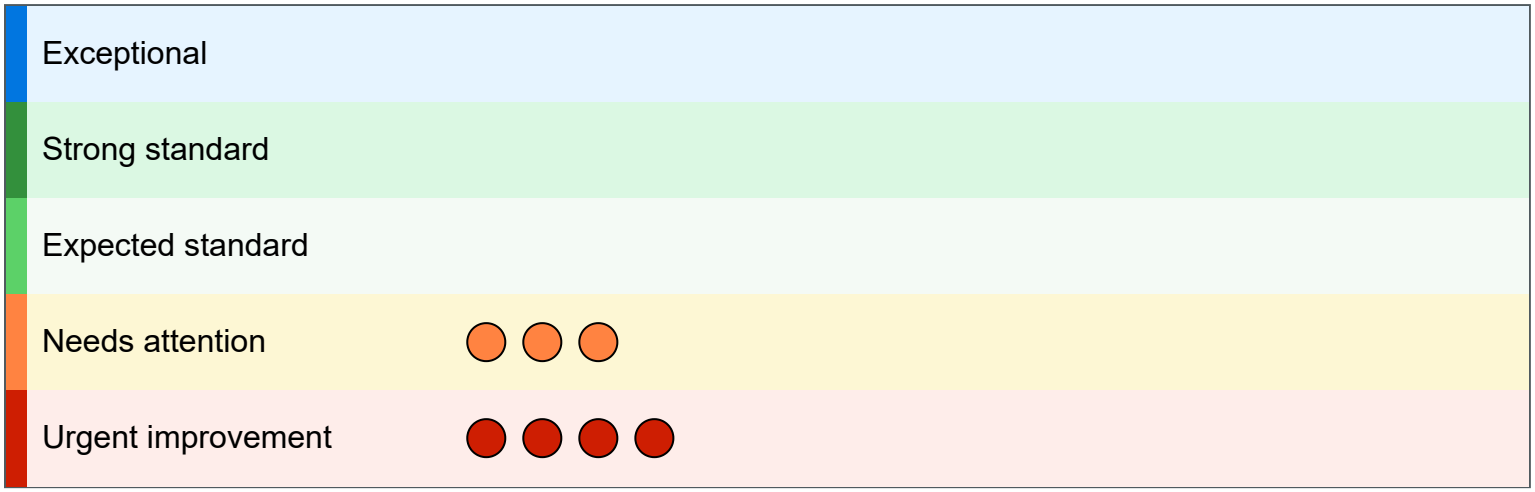
Yewtree Primary School

Address: Fletcher Way, Hemel Hempstead , Hertfordshire, HP2 5QR

Unique reference number (URN): 135222

Inspection report: 9 June 2026



⊗ Safeguarding standards not met

Leaders have not ensured that there is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that adequately protects children from harm.

The local authority recently audited safeguarding practice and identified important actions for leaders. Although some issues have been resolved, significant weaknesses remain. For example, while leaders have completed the missing checks for staff employed by the school, they have not applied the same rigour to adults from an external organisation who work with pupils.

Leaders' oversight of concerns raised about pupils is weak. They do not check closely enough the quality of what staff report or how concerns are followed up. At times, the way staff respond discourages pupils from speaking up, which reduces pupils' confidence that adults will act in their best interests.

Record-keeping is not strong enough. The records that should provide a complete and reliable picture of concerns and actions taken are incomplete. This leaves leaders relying on memory to recall what has happened, which is neither sustainable nor safe.

There are too many pupils whose behaviour puts them and others at risk of harm, such as fighting or leaving the building. Leaders' responses to these incidents are not consistently robust enough to keep pupils 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.

⊗ This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention

Leaders are making important changes in the early years. They have improved the classroom and outdoor areas so children can choose and use resources alongside their peers. This helps children to build, create and imagine with growing confidence. Still, leaders introducing many changes at once has placed pressure on staff, and this shows in some teaching.

Activities set up to encourage early writing do not build children's confidence or eagerness to write. Many children rely on adults to write for them because they cannot yet form all their letters or spell words that do not match the sounds they know. Assessment does not shape the teaching of writing well enough.

There are inconsistencies in how staff interact with children. In some activities, staff do not focus sharply on developing children's vocabulary or revisiting key ideas such as counting or personal space. They do not model clear standard English to support the children in their language development and understanding. This matters most for children who need extra support to communicate well.

Children are cared for in the early years environment. Staff build warm, trusting relationships with them. Staff model kind words, sharing and turn-taking. Children copy these behaviours. This helps them to settle, make friends and learn how to access the curriculum through play. Staff work hard to ensure children's behaviour is better than behaviour seen elsewhere in the school.

Inclusion

Needs attention

By Year 6, disadvantaged pupils remain far behind because daily teaching is not strong enough to close the gap. Leaders have put pupil premium funding into many helpful initiatives, but the way this support is delivered is not raising achievement.

There is some helpful support for pupils known, or previously known, to social care. For example, funded counselling helps build pupils' self-worth. However, the lack of vigilance and professional curiosity means these pupils are not getting effective help to overcome barriers linked to attendance, behaviour and learning.

Leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have work that is developing well and deserves recognition. They introduced new support for pupils with higher levels of need. It is having a positive impact. Teaching and the curriculum are closely shaped around what these pupils need. Pupils build listening skills and develop self-control in small, steady steps. Staff use picture-based communication systems well so that pupils who do not use spoken language learn how to express their wants and ideas more independently over time. However, elsewhere in the school, adaptations for pupils with SEND are not used effectively by adults, meaning that some pupils struggle to complete their work. This further widens the gaps in their learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Safeguarding and behaviour issues are having an impact on pupils' wellbeing. Even so, some aspects of the school's personal development programme are working well for pupils and so deserve recognition.

Personal, social and health education is generally taught well, with visitors helping pupils learn about topics such as financial literacy. There is suitable pastoral support, including counselling, for pupils who need extra help. Still, leaders need to hear more pupils' voices so they do not lose sight of how pupils' experiences in school affect their wellbeing.

Pupils enjoy taking on roles that help the school run smoothly. Older pupils guide younger pupils to and from the dining hall with care, which gives them a sense of responsibility and shows them that their actions matter.

Some pupils' social skills are not developing as they should. They struggle with the natural flow of conversation and sometimes talk over one another or lose track of what is being discussed. Some also find it hard to resolve disagreements calmly. Too many pupils become physical and are not supported sufficiently to manage conflict.

Pupils experience fundamental British values in practice. Voting for their house captain gave them a real 'voice' in school life and helped them to understand that voting matters.

There is a range of extracurricular clubs and visits to expand pupils' experiences. Activities include chess, dodgeball and choir performances at larger events. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoyed taking part in sports activities that helped them learn how to keep healthy. The pupil premium helps fund clubs and trips so that disadvantaged pupils are not excluded. Leaders check participation to make sure all pupils access what the school offers.

Urgent improvement

Achievement

Urgent improvement

Pupils' achievement is too low. Early reading is beginning to strengthen, helped by books that match the sounds that pupils know. However, many pupils have longstanding gaps in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. These gaps limit how well they learn across the curriculum. Outcomes over recent years remain well below national averages, with too few pupils meeting the expected standard. Attainment for disadvantaged pupils has declined, widening the gap with others.

The new specialist provision introduced this year is helping pupils to communicate more clearly and manage their emotions with greater confidence. This is making a positive difference for those who attend. However, many pupils with additional needs struggle to take part in lessons. Some cannot access the work and some step back from learning altogether, which deepens the gaps in knowledge.

As a result, too many pupils move on to secondary school without the secure knowledge and skills that they need for a strong start.

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement

Leaders have asked external professionals for advice on how to improve attendance. They are now changing how they respond when a pupil is reported absent. Staff check more carefully whether an absence is appropriate and direct pupils into school when this is the right action. This has helped overall attendance rise recently.

However, persistent absence is still too high for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some of these pupils have been on part-time timetables for long periods, which has not helped them attend regularly. Leaders' oversight of attendance, including part-time timetables, is not strong enough to secure the improvement needed.

A significant number of pupils show deliberate defiance and, at times, dangerous and highly disruptive behaviour. Over time, this behaviour has become embedded. Leaders have not sufficiently regained control. They do not ensure that staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils often decide for themselves what they will and will not do, including refusing to complete work or choosing to leave lessons. Staff, in response, either ignore the behaviour or resort to bargaining with pupils to follow instructions, to little effect. Repeated poor behaviour can tip into bullying. When this happens, the actions taken do not routinely stop the behaviour from continuing.

Curriculum and teaching

Urgent improvement

Leaders know that curriculum and teaching are not working well enough. They understand that, although a curriculum was written a few years ago to show what pupils should learn and when, this has not led to effective teaching. They recognise that teaching is not routinely based on strong evidence about how pupils learn. As a result, pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are often unsure how to tackle their work and rely on guessing rather than applying clear methods. This makes it harder for them to build the secure knowledge they need. Teaching continues to follow the school's curriculum planning rather than what pupils actually need to know to access the work for their year group. Consequently, as pupils move through the school, gaps in their knowledge grow.

Leaders' actions to improve teaching have not been successful. Although they have received training in how to coach staff, leaders are still developing the confidence and skill to do this effectively. A breakdown in trust between some leaders and staff is slowing this work further. As a consequence, actions to improve the curriculum and teaching are not happening quickly enough to raise standards for pupils.

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement

Recent turbulence in the school has increased workload pressures for everyone. Leaders and staff feel unsettled. This has affected how well people communicate and work together. Progress through the school improvement priorities has stalled.

Leaders and governors can identify what is working well and what is not. They gather information from different sources and understand the main weaknesses. However, they do not set out clear measures of success at the start of their work, so it is not always clear what improvement should look like. This reduces focus and makes it harder for people to challenge one another about how well actions are working.

The number of weaknesses that need addressing adds further difficulty. Staff workload and wellbeing suffer because leaders divide their focus across too many issues at once. This stops work from sustaining, as leaders move from one issue to another without seeing improvements through. As a result, some weaknesses persist, and some have worsened over time. In safeguarding, this has contributed to some statutory duties not being met.

Professional learning is not arranged well enough to develop staff expertise. Too many people lack the knowledge they need to carry out their roles well.

Though some parents and carers appreciate the support of leaders and staff, others have lost confidence in the school and its links with the community. Leaders accept more needs to be done to improve parental engagement.

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

Many pupils are underachieving. Too many struggle to communicate, read, write and calculate at the level expected for their age. Barriers to learning are not being overcome because adaptations are not used consistently or effectively. Teaching does not secure the foundations pupils need, so gaps widen rather than close. This is reflected in the very weak outcomes pupils achieve in the statutory assessments at the end of Year 6.

Too often, pupils experience lessons disrupted by classmates. They ignore staff, refuse to work or leave classrooms. Unkind words and actions are common. When these behaviours are not addressed, they repeat and sometimes escalate. This creates an atmosphere that is not calm or respectful. Pupils who behave well feel worn down by this. They feel uncomfortable, and at times scared, when other pupils' behaviour intensifies. They also notice that consequences for poor behaviour are not always applied appropriately, which feels unfair.

Similar issues appear at playtimes. Football has been stopped because it leads to arguments or fights. Too many pupils are not learning how to play well together or develop the social skills needed to manage disagreements and enjoy social times. However, pupils appreciate the changes leaders are making, such as introducing den building to encourage creative play.

The revised start-of-day routine helps pupils enter school calmly. Pupils appreciate the warm bagels on offer for breakfast, which help provide a welcoming start to the school day. This approach is reflected in recent improvements in overall attendance. Still, more needs to be done to reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who regularly miss school.

Although pupils generally feel able to share concerns with staff, the issues they report often continue. Pupils have learned to accept this. They no longer expect problems to be dealt with in a way that makes their day feel settled and safe.

Next steps

- Leaders must address how they and staff stay alert to signs that pupils may be unsafe, using better oversight and curiosity to spot concerns early and act quickly.
- Leaders must ensure their pupil premium strategy is implemented effectively and its impact evaluated rigorously so disadvantaged pupils receive support that improves their learning and wellbeing.
- Leaders should ensure adaptations are applied consistently and work effectively so pupils receive the support they need to overcome barriers to learning and engage confidently.
- Leaders must ensure staff hold high expectations of what pupils should know and be able to do and use evidence-informed approaches so teaching helps pupils gain the knowledge they need.
- Leaders must address how early foundations in reading, writing and mathematics are secured and how gaps are addressed later so pupils are ready for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders must reduce persistent absence and ensure part-time timetables are time-limited, using clear expectations, consistent follow-up and timely escalation to secure full-time attendance.
- Leaders must work with staff to instil clear behavioural expectations in pupils so behaviour improves and effective action is taken when expectations are not met.
- Leaders should improve how pupils are taught and supported to develop social skills so they learn to cooperate, communicate clearly and build positive relationships.
- In early years, leaders should guide staff to use what they know about each child to model, question and prompt responsively, building children's confidence and competence, particularly in early writing.
- Leaders and governors must access professional learning that strengthens how they identify issues, act on them effectively and review impact rigorously so weaknesses are addressed in a timely way.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dawn Helfgott.

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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, governors and representatives working on behalf of the local authority.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspections we carry out.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

The school offers before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. It is run by staff and overseen by the governing body.

Headteacher: Karen Yilmaz

Lead inspector:
Daniel Short, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Richard Fordham, Ofsted Inspector
Charlene Foster, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

347
Close to 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

420
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)

41.72%
Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

3.46%
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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.68%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	24%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	17%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	34%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	25%	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	55%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	52%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	41%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	37%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	42%	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	38%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	31%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	41%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	42%	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	11%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	6%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	8%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	16%	44%	Below

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	39%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	22%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	30%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	15%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	58%	Below

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	23%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	17%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	8%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	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	11%	68%	-57 pp
2024/25 (final)	6%	69%	-64 pp
2023/24 (final)	8%	67%	-60 pp
2022/23 (final)	16%	66%	-50 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	39%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	22%	81%	-59 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	80%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	52%	78%	-26 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	30%	78%	-47 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	78%	-45 pp
2023/24 (final)	15%	78%	-62 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	36%	77%	-41 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	23%	80%	-56 pp
2024/25 (final)	17%	81%	-64 pp
2023/24 (final)	8%	79%	-72 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	79%	-43 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)	9.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.8%	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)	31.4%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	37.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.4%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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