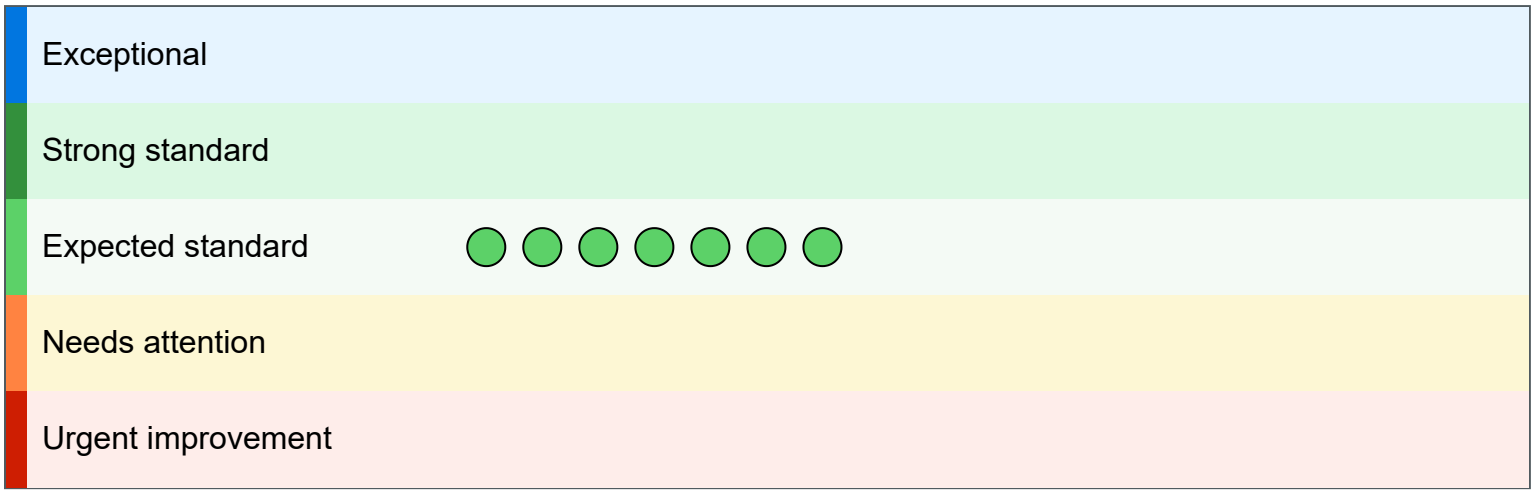
Churchend Primary Academy

Address: Usk Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4HP

Unique reference number (URN): 136457

Inspection report: 9 September 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 learn successfully across the curriculum, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is reflected in pupils' key stage 2 outcomes, which overall are in line with national averages. Curriculum adaptations aimed at strengthening pupils' early reading, writing and mathematics knowledge have improved their attainment over time, including in the phonics screening check.

Generally, pupils remember their learning well, forming links with what they already know when they learn new knowledge and concepts. Those who join the school with lower starting points make effective progress over time. As a result, pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

From the early years onwards, pupils' work reflects the positive progress they make over time. Pupils' recall of their learning across subjects beyond mathematics and English is sound. Teachers support this by regularly revisiting learning and providing opportunities for pupils to practise and hone key skills.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils want to attend regularly. This reflects the positive relationships and inclusive culture across the school. Leaders have a secure understanding of absence and the reasons that influence pupils' attendance. They work proactively with parents, carers and wider professionals to remove barriers to regular attendance. This work is generally successful. It is reflected in attendance rates that continue to improve and are broadly in line with national averages. However, attendance remains less secure for a small group of pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance is not yet as consistent as that of their peers.

There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Systems for identifying, recording and responding to behaviour are robust. Leaders maintain detailed records and analyse patterns regularly. They use this information effectively to implement tailored support for individual pupils and address wider trends. Pupils respond positively to collective and individual praise and rewards. They try hard and take pride in their learning. The majority of pupils are attentive and motivated, needing few reminders to concentrate. Bullying and discriminatory incidents are rare and are investigated thoroughly. Consequently, pupils trust adults will support them and keep them safe.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum includes the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. It is broad and ambitious. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and model learning effectively. This helps pupils to develop new knowledge and engage positively with the curriculum. Leaders provide appropriate training to develop staff expertise across subjects. Staff are generally effective in supporting pupils to understand, remember and apply new learning and vocabulary.

Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils are taught the sounds and patterns required to read and spell words accurately. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply and practise these skills through reading and writing activities. This helps to build their confidence and fluency. Pupils who require additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from timely intervention. This enables them to catch up successfully and access the wider curriculum.

Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding to assess what they know and remember. However, variation in the effectiveness of these checks means that misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are not consistently identified and addressed.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for early years. They consider children's prior learning and interests. Staff plan activities that build on what children already know and can do, whatever their starting points. Consequently, children who encounter barriers to learning achieve well and remain on track with their peers.

Children in the early years are content, settled and receive high-quality care. Their emotional wellbeing is given high priority. Teaching staff strike an appropriate balance between providing support and encouraging children to develop independence and confidence. Staff sustain constructive, trusting relationships with parents and carers. As a result, families are well placed to support their children's learning at home. Parents feel comfortable raising any concerns with staff.

Effective transition processes help new starters to settle quickly and develop positive relationships. Reading is prioritised through focused phonics teaching. Children develop their phonics knowledge and understanding. This enables them to read and write basic words and phrases. At the end of Reception Year, staff communicate clearly between the early years and Year 1. Teaching supports children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, so that they are typically well prepared for their next steps of education.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders ensure they identify pupils' needs quickly. This includes working with other professionals to support disadvantaged pupils and those who find it difficult to attend school regularly. Leaders communicate pupils' needs precisely to staff. This enables teachers to identify potential barriers to learning and attendance accurately. Leaders ensure that staff are well equipped to support pupils. A structured training programme helps develop staff knowledge and expertise. As a result, staff are increasingly effective in meeting pupils' needs. This work generally helps pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Pupils typically make secure progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders maintain a firm focus on disadvantaged pupils and use additional funding effectively. They prioritise reducing barriers to participation in the school's wider offer. For example, they track pupils' engagement in visits, trips and clubs and offer support to increase take-up of these opportunities. As a result, pupils feel included, supported and part

of the school community. Leaders provide tailored pastoral support to promote pupils' emotional wellbeing. This helps pupils to understand and regulate their emotions, develop confidence and manage their behaviour effectively. Typically leaders' actions have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and experiences.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders at all levels have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas requiring further development. Staff training and development are closely coordinated with the school's strategic priorities. Working alongside the trust, leaders have taken appropriate action to address areas of concern. They ensure that decisions and improvements are shaped by the needs of pupils, including those who face additional challenges related to their wellbeing, attendance or learning. Trust leaders undertake regular reviews, which provide them with a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. School leaders value the challenge and support offered by the trust.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory responsibilities diligently. Governors offer a balanced level of support and challenge, while trustees maintain a secure understanding of the school's context. They ask pertinent questions about leaders' actions to drive school improvement. Leaders have fostered a culture in which pupils benefit from a well-rounded and stimulating education.

Staff are very proud to work at the school. They value how leaders, governors and members of the trust help them balance their workload. Staff feel able to maintain a healthy work-life balance. They welcome the professional development opportunities provided by leaders and recognise how these have helped to develop their practice.

Parents and carers value the approachable nature of staff and feel their views are listened to. They appreciate the progress their children make through the school. This includes parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils benefit from the school's approach to their personal development. They understand the school's values and aspirations for their future success. As a result, they develop important learning characteristics, such as independence and resilience, which help them to learn effectively. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have for leadership responsibility. Roles such as school councillor, librarian, eco champion and house captain enable pupils to contribute positively to school life. These experiences support pupils to develop a broader understanding of democracy, sustainability and responsibility. Older pupils act as positive role models for their younger peers.

Pupils learn how to assess and manage risk effectively. They develop a secure understanding of first aid, online safety and road safety. They know who to approach if they have any concerns. Leaders promote fundamental British values effectively, and pupils have a secure understanding of these. They demonstrate this through respectful relationships and considerate attitudes towards others. The school meets its statutory requirements for relationships, sex and health education. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include clubs, trips and residentials. Pupils enjoy participating in choir, running and drama clubs. Leaders track attendance closely and ensure disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to participate. Pupils enthuse about their opportunities to go on residentials, keenly recalling what they learn from them. Adaptations are provided where needed so that all pupils can benefit fully.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. This enables them to provide tailored pastoral support, particularly for those who face barriers to their wellbeing. The school's skilled staff help pupils to address concerns effectively, enabling them to focus on learning.

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

Pupils are proud to attend this warm, welcoming school. They are happy, feel safe and enjoy being part of a community where positive relationships are at the heart of school life. Pupils understand the school's values and speak confidently about the importance of showing respect, resilience and care. These values are evident in pupils' interactions and contribute to the calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils get on well together and are courteous towards adults and their peers.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They follow routines and understand leaders' high expectations. Most pupils approach their learning positively and value the support they receive from staff. Pupils feel well cared for and know who to speak to if they have concerns. The school's pastoral provision is effective. Where helpful, pupils benefit from targeted support, including the Sunflower room and the nurture provision within the Dandelion room. These purposeful spaces help pupils to develop confidence, emotional regulation and readiness for learning. This enables them to engage successfully in school life.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that enhance their experiences beyond the classroom. They enjoy participating in clubs such as parkour, card crafting and multi-sports. Educational visits, including trips to the pantomime and castles, help pupils develop their cultural understanding and bring learning to life. Pupils are proud to represent the school in events and competitions. These provide them with opportunities to celebrate their talents, for example in sport and music.

Visiting professionals, such as emergency services personnel, enrich the curriculum and help pupils develop their understanding of personal safety and the wider world. These experiences contribute positively to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school.

Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive ready to learn. Pupils who require additional support, including disadvantaged pupils, benefit from appropriate interventions that help improve attendance and reduce absence.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently identify pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their learning and provide sufficient opportunities for accurate practice to address these gaps and secure improvement.
- Leaders should sustain their work to improve attendance so that even more disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly.

About this inspection

This school is part of Orchard Learning Alliance 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), Sam Nowak, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dave Williams.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection took place on 9 and 10 September 2026.

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 and other senior leaders, trustees, the chair of the local governing body, the CEO and the director of primary education for the trust. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Lou Slocombe

Lead inspector:
Martin Dyer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Laura James, His Majesty's Inspector
Neil Pilsworth, His Majesty's 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 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

401
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: 268

School capacity

446
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)

18.45%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.5%

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

2.99%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.98%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	71%	Close to average

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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	66%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	59%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	60%	Above

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	48%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	59%	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 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	45%	68%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	69%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	30%	67%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 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	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	80%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	78%	-2 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	48%	78%	-30 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	30%	78%	-48 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	77%	-30 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	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	79%	-3 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)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	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 (3 term)	19.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	17.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.1%	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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