

Bentley St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Address: Ashwells Road, Bentley, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9SE

Unique reference number (URN): 149971

Inspection report: 19 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school's personal development programme is very broad and purposeful. Leaders ensure that pupils experience a wide range of opportunities that enhance their skills and develop their mindset. These experiences build on the school's values, which are deeply embedded across the school community. Pupils demonstrate these values through their daily actions, and staff recognise and celebrate this consistently. Older pupils support younger pupils by reinforcing the school's high expectations and explaining how these can be demonstrated through positive behaviour.

The school's personal, social and health education curriculum and relationships and sex education programme closely align. This ensures that pupils develop secure knowledge and understanding in these areas over time. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and confidently describe a range of strategies that they use to manage risk. The school supports parents and carers through workshops and guidance, enabling them to reinforce these messages at home and support safe practice further.

Pupils understand that diversity takes many forms. They recognise the importance of respecting different opinions, even when these differ from their own. They explore these themes through carefully chosen texts across the curriculum. Pupils also learn how to contribute positively to their community, developing a meaningful understanding of fundamental British values. As they get older, pupils take on elected and appointed leadership roles.

Pastoral support is effective across the school. Leaders ensure that pupils who need additional support can access counselling and regular check-ins, or attend targeted groups. As a result, vulnerable pupils receive timely support and families feel well supported and reassured. This approach strengthens pupils' confidence, resilience and readiness for future learning. It also helps pupils to feel safe, valued and included within the school community. The school fosters pupils' positive attitudes towards themselves and others. The programme prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Generally, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils secure broadly age-related knowledge, giving them the foundations needed to move on to the next stage of learning. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make clear progress through the school curriculum, or through a personalised curriculum designed to meet their needs. For a few pupils with SEND, their progress through the curriculum is slower because their next steps in learning are sometimes not identified precisely.

Important knowledge needed for later learning is a key focus across the school. As a result of effective teaching in subjects such as mathematics, pupils understand the methods that they use and apply their knowledge accurately when completing calculations.

Staff use a range of strategies to support pupils' recall of key information. Pupils across the curriculum confidently discuss what they have learned. This highlights how their knowledge develops over time. For example, Year 4 pupils explained how classroom learning supported their understanding during a history workshop on ancient Egypt.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have established clear processes and procedures to secure pupils' regular attendance at school. These actions have been effective. Attendance rates are above national averages. This applies to all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that pupils who require additional support with attendance receive it. For some pupils, this includes access to the school counselling service. Therefore, barriers to regular attendance are identified early and addressed effectively. This is a consistent and supportive approach.

Pupils are respectful and calm in lessons and on the playground. They strive to earn rewards and feel proud of their achievements when they receive them. Pupils are also clear about the consequences of their actions and know that staff apply these consistently, which generally has the desired impact. Pupils feel that consequences normally address unkind behaviour, which is typically not repeated. Pupils understand what bullying is and, due to positive relationships with staff, trust that adults will act quickly to resolve any unkindness. Leaders review pupils' behaviour carefully. Pupils who need additional support receive this through classroom strategies, targeted resources and support from external agencies. As a result, their behaviour improves and they make the right choices.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum. Clear curriculum thinking is in place for all subjects. This thinking is clearly communicated to staff, building on prior learning. Generally, staff teach the curriculum as intended. They follow the school's agreed approach to lesson structure, ensuring that pupils have opportunities to recap their learning. However, some staff do not consistently check pupils' understanding as carefully as they could. This reduces opportunities to identify pupils' misconceptions, address errors and deepen their understanding.

Teachers place a clear focus on key foundational knowledge. Staff teach phonics consistently and effectively, highlighting the positive impact of ongoing training across the school. Pupils who struggle with phonics receive additional support so that they reach expected standards as quickly as possible. The school has also developed handwriting support for pupils to ensure that they leave the school with clear, legible and fluent handwriting.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who require additional support receive this through a wide range of strategies and approaches. Staff are well trained to provide this support. Leaders ensure that, generally, individuals' needs are met,

and where a more personalised approach is required, they implement this effectively. For a small number of pupils with SEND, their next steps in learning are not identified precisely. Therefore, progress is harder to identify through the curriculum. Pupils with other barriers to learning and wellbeing also receive effective support.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of development and practice in the early years. Children leave the early years well prepared for the next stage of their education, having developed the key skills and knowledge that they need to continue learning successfully.

A coherent curriculum engages children across all areas of learning through carefully chosen themes. Themes such as 'creep', 'crawl' and 'wiggle' are visible throughout the learning environment and support children's understanding. Children engage confidently in a range of activities, including Aboriginal art painting, minibeast exploration, activities to develop balance and coordination and creative play.

Staff provide a wide range of activities that develop the key skills that children need for future learning. For example, children practise writing and number work regularly. Children complete activities with increasing independence, completing tasks successfully before moving on to new learning.

Leaders know the children well. Staff meet their individual needs effectively. Staff identify barriers to learning quickly, enabling children to access the environment alongside their peers successfully. Staff and children form positive relationships. However, staff's questioning sometimes does not consistently extend or deepen children's learning or challenge their thinking further.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that appropriate provision is in place so that pupils can make progress, however small those steps may be. Staff ensure that everyone is included in activities. Wherever possible, pupils learn alongside their peers. To do this, leaders adapt teaching and resources for pupils who need it. However, at times the learning targets set for some pupils lack precision, which hinders these pupils' progress.

Leaders use additional funding carefully to support pupils experiencing vulnerability. They use a research-based approach to provide effective support. They check that it has a positive impact. Some pupils benefit from targeted academic support, while others receive effective support for their wellbeing.

For pupils previously known to social care, leaders work closely with the local authority to consider what each pupil needs in order to thrive. Where possible, this support begins before pupils join the school, ensuring a smooth transition.

Leaders' approach ensures that barriers to learning are reduced, that expectations remain high and that all pupils feel supported within the school community. Overall, disadvantaged pupils are valued, enabling them to succeed within the school community.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school community well. They ensure that they tailor provision to meet the needs of the pupils within it. When leaders identify areas that require improvement, they address these thoughtfully and with care, ensuring that changes are well considered and sustainable.

Governors show a steadfast commitment to the school. They strive to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. Governors support and challenge leaders effectively, particularly in areas where they have expertise. However, in areas where their knowledge is less secure, their challenge is more limited. Governors are approachable, enabling open communication with staff, pupils and parents and carers across the school community.

Staff are well trained in the approaches that the school has prioritised, for example phonics. They understand expectations clearly, working together to deliver these consistently. They work closely with trust colleagues where appropriate, sharing knowledge and effective practice to strengthen provision further.

Staff enjoy working at the school and recognise that leaders consider their workload and wellbeing carefully. Leaders ensure that staff can raise concerns promptly and feel supported. As a result, staff feel valued, which contributes to high morale and a stable workforce.

Parents are positive about the school. Leaders remain visible and accessible, which helps to build parents' confidence in the education their children receive.

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

Pupils, staff and parents and carers are proud of this nurturing school. Pupils are happy when they arrive at school each day. Staff provide a warm, friendly welcome to pupils, which contributes to regular attendance and helps pupils to feel settled and ready to learn.

Pupils are polite, friendly and behave well. They strive to gain rewards, such as the headteacher's badge, which they wear with pride. Warm, caring relationships between staff and pupils help them feel safe and secure. In the playground, pupils ensure that everyone can join in. For some, this may mean adapting games to meet everyone's needs. Pupils do this thoughtfully. They understand what bullying is and recognise that it happens rarely. They trust that staff will deal with any concerns carefully. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils engage well with their learning and share what they are learning keenly, especially in the early years. Pupils demonstrate resilience, regularly trying again when they do not get the answer right first time. Pupils contribute to discussions, listen respectfully to others' opinions, and present their own ideas confidently and clearly. They benefit from a broad

curriculum, including educational visits, which deepen their understanding. Pupils recall key knowledge linked to trips, including visits to the Tower of London and Colchester Castle. They also enjoy developing a wide range of skills through residential trips and outdoor adventurous activities, which build pupils' confidence and independence. As a result, pupils achieve well and are prepared for the next stages of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. They work with staff who know them well. Staff adapt the curriculum and make necessary adjustments so that pupils succeed in their learning. Where necessary, they personalise the learning to meet the individual's needs.

Next steps

- Leaders should identify precise learning steps for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that pupils with SEND consistently achieve their learning goals.
 - Leaders should continue to develop consistency in teaching approaches, including effective use of questioning, across all phases.
 - Those responsible for governance should develop their knowledge across areas where they are less secure, so that they can challenge leaders' decisions with equal rigour.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Mid Essex Anglican 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, Sally Taggart, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Barton.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body, trust and diocese.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chelmsford. Its last section 48 inspection was in May 2026.

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

Lead inspector:

Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sara Boyce, His Majesty's Inspector

Vicki Webber, 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

203

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

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)

7.88%

Well 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: 26.3%

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

4.93%

Above 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

12.81%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below 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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	61%	Above
2022/23		60%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

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

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	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)	7.1%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.8%	14.6%	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.

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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