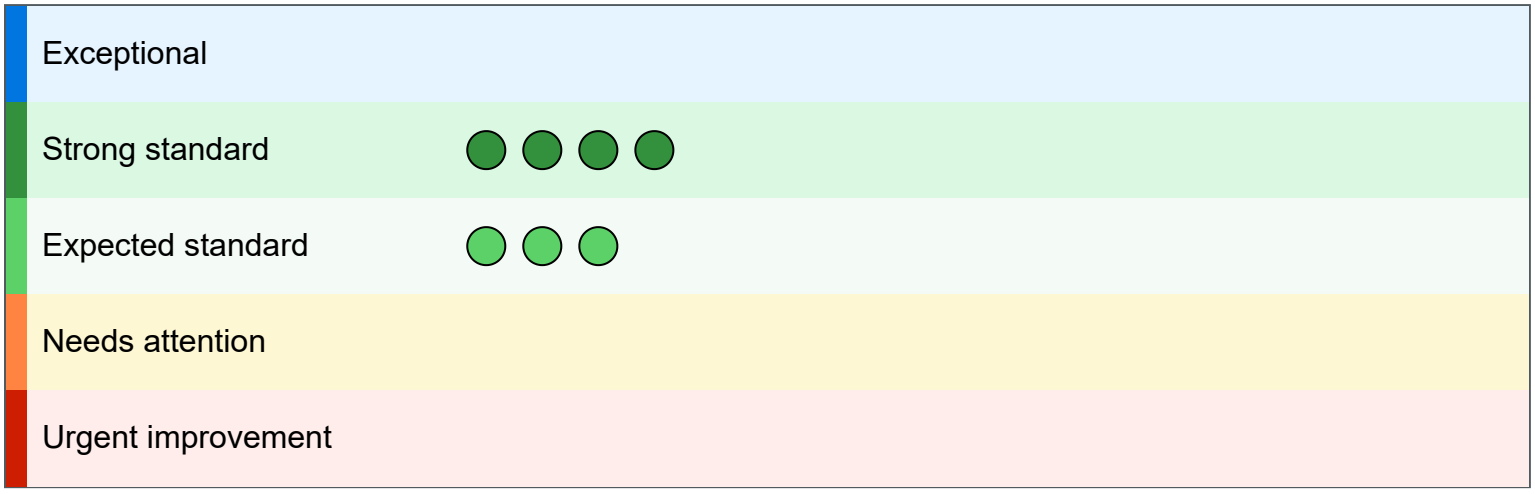
Great Chesterford Church of England Primary Academy

Address: School Street, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1NN

Unique reference number (URN): 137516

Inspection report: 6 October 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

The school ensures that pupils are ready for their next stage of education. Pupils consistently achieve above national averages in published assessment results. The school is highly inclusive. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve equally well from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically make strong progress from their starting points. From Reception, the school prioritises foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, enabling pupils to achieve well. Leaders regularly track pupils' progress so that gaps in their knowledge and skills are identified and addressed promptly. As a result, pupils achieve well across all year groups.

The school works effectively to build pupils' confidence and resilience. Pupils develop their independence through educational visits and using public transport. They also represent their school in competitions. They learn to cooperate with others and show respect. These skills prepare them well for their next steps, including their transition to secondary school.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have established a highly effective strategic approach to inclusion. Leaders are aware that the school has fewer disadvantaged pupils than other schools nationally. They take proactive steps to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to feel included and achieve well. This includes effective use of pupil premium funding.

Leaders have robust processes in place to identify pupils’ needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use a range of well-considered assessment tools to identify where pupils may be struggling. Leaders and staff use this information well to construct precise plans to support pupils' learning or wellbeing. The support they provide is closely matched to individual pupils' needs. Leaders closely monitor the impact of additional support to ensure it addresses barriers that pupils may face. They act quickly when pupils need further support to achieve well. Where needed, well-trained staff provide pupils with one-to-one or small-group support. As a result of effective support strategies, barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing are addressed successfully. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. They use evidence about pupils' achievement, attendance and the quality of teaching to inform their decisions. The school's Christian ethos underpins leaders' high expectations and promotes a strong sense of belonging. Leaders ensure that improvement plans consider the needs of different groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils. Governance is a strength of the school. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They provide knowledgeable support and challenge. Governors visit regularly, meet leaders and

seek parents' and carers' views. This gives governors a detailed understanding of school life and enables them to evaluate the school's progress.

Leaders' approach to professional development reflects school priorities and staff needs. Training in phonics and trauma-informed practice develops staff expertise. Early career teachers are well supported with mentoring. Partnerships with other agencies and organisations enable the sharing of good practice. Leaders give careful attention to staff workload and wellbeing. Staff value leaders' approachable manner. They feel listened to, involved in decisions and supported when needed.

Relationships with parents and the wider community are strong. The school's Christian ethos is reflected in its links with the local church. The vicar leads monthly worship. Pupils contribute to their local community through church activities such as gardening. Responses to Ofsted's surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction among parents and carers. The school provides regular communication, drop-in sessions and well-attended events to support these partnerships.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have planned a coherent personal development programme that develops pupils' knowledge, confidence and independence. They adapt learning and wider experiences to meet the needs of different year groups and individual pupils. Pupils confidently explain their learning and how it helps them in everyday life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through learning about different beliefs, participating in collective worship and contributing to their community. Older pupils lead worship, which helps to build their confidence. Pupils show care for others through charitable activities and their responsibilities as buddies, librarians and play leaders.

Relationships and health education are appropriate for pupils' ages. Pupils understand that families differ and that positive relationships are built on love, care and respect. They explain how to stay healthy and manage risks online and offline. Teaching about safety in the community, including road safety, develops pupils' awareness of risks. The school helps pupils understand and demonstrate fundamental British values. Pupils respect difference and understand why rules matter. Voting for their school councillors develops their understanding of democracy. The council influences the school's decisions, including choosing play equipment for younger pupils.

Leaders ensure that pupils can benefit from a wide range of clubs, music, sports and visits. Financial support enables disadvantaged pupils to participate fully. Staff adapt activities where needed, including making appropriate arrangements for residential visits. Pupils greatly appreciate the opportunity to enjoy residentials in Year 4 and Year 6. These experiences develop their teamwork and independence.

Staff know their pupils well. They provide sensitive and effective pastoral support. Pupils trust adults to listen and can use worry boxes to share concerns privately. The nurture room, learning mentors and specialist support help pupils manage their emotions and friendships. Older buddies help Reception children settle into school routines. These approaches help pupils to thrive.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have secure oversight of attendance. Attendance is consistently above the national average. This typically includes vulnerable pupils. Persistent absence is rare. This ensures that pupils access the full breadth of school experiences. Leaders closely monitor pupils' absence. Staff develop positive relationships with families. They greet parents and pupils on arrival and support pupils to arrive punctually. When families need additional support to improve attendance, leaders promptly seek help from external agencies.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently positive. Bullying and unkindness are extremely rare. The environment is warm and welcoming. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect towards each other. They have excellent manners. From Reception, children play well together. At lunchtime, pupils enjoy activities such as football and using the climbing frame. In lessons, pupils typically demonstrate high levels of engagement. They enjoy learning and are keen to achieve well. Staff are developing pupils' understanding of routines. Teachers typically make appropriate adjustments to support the small number of pupils who need additional help. This minimises disruption and helps pupils learn well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have embedded an ambitious curriculum. They prioritise securing strong foundations in learning from Reception onwards. Staff ensure pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to become confident readers, writers and mathematicians. From the start, children benefit from high-quality phonics sessions. The wider curriculum is equally rich. Leaders ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and skills through engaging learning experiences. The curriculum content encourages pupils to think deeply and challenge themselves. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to develop pupils' understanding across different subjects. For example, in science lessons, teachers model concepts such as pushing and pulling. Pupils use this knowledge to explain their understanding using appropriate scientific vocabulary. This helps them build on what they already know and deepen their understanding. When learning about the solar system, pupils confidently recall prior knowledge about planets. Teachers use discussion and questioning effectively to help pupils develop and secure their understanding.

Teachers typically make appropriate adjustments to teaching to ensure pupils are well supported. Learning support assistants are highly skilled in providing pupils with additional help. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, teachers are unsure how best to adapt their teaching. When this happens, lesson time is not used effectively and pupils are unsure how to approach their learning.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders have established a welcoming early years provision where children settle well. Staff work with families and children's previous settings to understand their starting points and identify their needs. The curriculum covers all areas of learning and prepares children well

for Year 1. Children develop their early reading skills through effective phonics teaching. Staff confidently assess children's progress and provide additional support when needed.

Children enjoy a range of activities, such as building houses with blocks, mark-making, practising letter formation and exploring shapes. Staff engage warmly with children and encourage conversation. However, staff do not always use activities and the learning environment purposefully enough to develop children's knowledge and skills.

Staff help children develop important social skills, including forming friendships and playing well together. They benefit from excellent relationships with staff and their buddies in Year 6. Most children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. They have the skills and knowledge they need to transition successfully into Year 1. Staff support children with additional needs well, including through individual adult support. Children achieve well. Close communication with Year 1 staff helps children make successful transitions into Year 1.

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

Pupils enjoy learning in a school where adults expect them to do well. They benefit from experiences that broaden their knowledge and help them prepare for their next steps. From Reception, pupils develop strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Staff are skilled at providing high-quality support to pupils who need extra help. Where needed, pupils benefit from extra opportunities to talk to an adult about how they are feeling. If pupils have any gaps in their skills or knowledge, leaders identify and address them promptly.

Pupils feel part of a caring community, shaped by the school's Christian ethos. They understand the importance of treating others with respect. Older pupils help children in the Reception year to settle. This builds friendships across year groups. Pupils know their views matter. School councillors helped introduce classroom worry boxes. A wealth of enrichment opportunities, such as music, sports, performances and residential visits, are extremely well attended. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully represented in different aspects of school life. Pupils contribute to the lives of others in meaningful ways. This includes charitable activities, links to the local church and worship.

Pupils attend regularly. They feel safe and trust adults to listen to them when they need help. They value the support they receive and know several adults they can talk to if needed. Pupils understand what bullying is and what to do if it happens. They are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and take appropriate action. Pupils show respect for others. From Reception, they work and play well together.

Next steps

- Leaders should further develop teachers' pedagogical expertise, so they consistently make purposeful use of lesson time and adapt their teaching precisely to enable pupils with different starting points to excel.
- Leaders should ensure the early years curriculum is implemented with greater precision. Activities and the learning environment should be more purposefully utilised to build the specific knowledge and skills children need.

About this inspection

This school is part of Great Oak Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Mitchell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Barker.
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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.
Inspectors spoke with trustees, governors, senior leaders and a representative from the Diocese during the inspection.
This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chelmsford. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2019.
The school currently uses no alternative provision.
A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Amy Sargeant

Lead inspector:
Bessie Owen, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Marcus Cooper, Ofsted Inspector
Helen Bartley, 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

177
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: 268

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)

5.08%
Well below 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

1.13%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.86%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	88%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	61%	Above

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	92%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	96%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	72%	Above

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	92%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26		49%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	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	R	R	R
2025/26		63%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	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	R	R	R
2025/26		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

‘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	R	R	R
2025/26		70%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26		81%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	17%	80%	-63 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	R	R	R
2025/26		79%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	R	R	R
2025/26		82%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

‘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
2025/26 (1 term)	2.4%	5.1%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	3.6%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	3.8%	14.4%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	6.1%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.5%	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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright