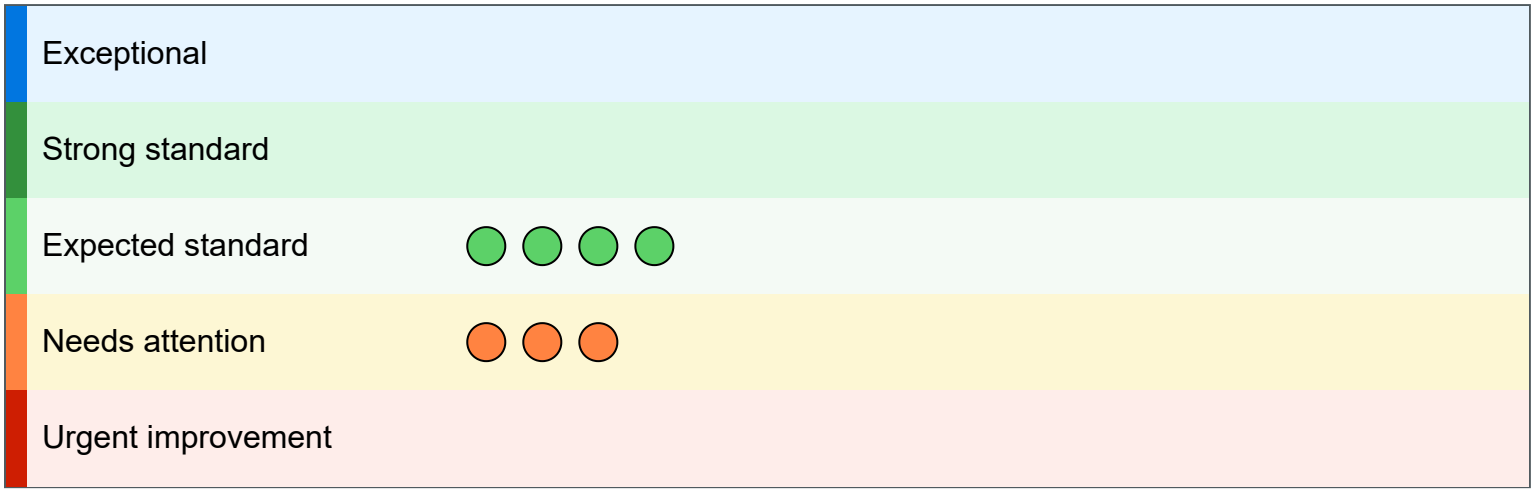
Ashdon Primary School

Address: Bartlow Road, Ashdon, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2HB

Unique reference number (URN): 114964

Inspection report: 15 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders monitor the attendance of individual pupils closely and respond quickly when concerns arise. They understand the reasons behind absence and work closely with families to improve attendance where it falls below expected levels. In a small school, the attendance of a few pupils can have a noticeable impact on published figures. Leaders know which pupils need support and work with families to improve attendance. Most pupils attend frequently and arrive ready to take part in school life.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school's values help to shape pupils' conduct and interactions with others. Expectations are understood across the school, including in mixed-age classes where older pupils often set a positive example for younger children. Pupils usually focus on their learning, and disruption is uncommon. Staff address any incidents of poor behaviour consistently well, helping pupils understand what is expected of them. This supports learning and enables lessons to proceed without unnecessary interruption.

Pupils move sensibly around the school and conduct themselves well during social times. They understand the routines that help the school run smoothly and contribute positively to the orderly environment.

Early years

Expected standard

Children settle quickly into school and become confident members of the Reception/Year 1 class. Staff establish clear routines from the start and children quickly learn what is expected of them. They play and learn happily alongside older pupils and benefit from the positive relationships across the school. Reception children readily seek help when needed and show growing independence in their learning and daily routines.

The curriculum is adapted carefully to meet the needs of a mixed-age class. Staff plan activities that help children develop their language, early reading, writing and mathematical understanding. Children work cooperatively while building and creating, discuss their ideas with adults and each other, and use writing for a purpose during their play. These experiences encourage curiosity and a willingness to explore new ideas.

Children develop early reading skills well. Staff follow the school's phonics approach consistently and provide opportunities for children to practise and apply their knowledge throughout the day. Adults use questioning effectively to develop children's language and thinking.

Staff know children well and use ongoing observations to identify next steps in learning. Children enjoy learning, work cooperatively and increasingly take responsibility for their own learning. These experiences help children make a secure start to school life and prepare them for the expectations of Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Staff know pupils and their families well. They identify when pupils may need additional help and work with parents, carers and external agencies to secure support. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Staff review pupils' needs regularly so that support reflects changes in their circumstances.

Staff understand pupils' individual needs and provide support that helps them take part in school routines and activities. Parents value the communication they receive and appreciate the care shown towards their children.

Leaders promote an inclusive culture where differences are understood and respected. Staff and pupils demonstrate the values of care, challenge and celebration in their daily interactions. Pupils learn to show consideration for others and understand the importance of treating people fairly. This helps them develop positive relationships and respect for different experiences and backgrounds.

Pupils who face additional challenges are included in the wider life of the school. Staff help them to access opportunities such as clubs, educational visits, performances, sporting events and leadership roles. This helps pupils feel valued and able to play an active part in the school and the wider community.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that the school's small size does not prevent pupils from accessing experiences that broaden their horizons. Pupils participate in clubs, sporting competitions, performances and community events. Many choose to attend the popular running club, demonstrating their enthusiasm for being active and involved in school life. These opportunities help pupils discover new interests and talents and develop a wider understanding of the world around them.

Pupils take pride in the responsibilities they hold. Opportunities to serve on the school council, act as house captains and support younger pupils help them understand the importance of contributing to school life. Older pupils take these responsibilities seriously. They encourage younger children to join in, for example, encouraging them to keep going when running becomes challenging and celebrating success. This support happens naturally and is a valued part of daily life. Younger pupils quickly learn that they are part of a community where people help one another.

The school's values of care, challenge and celebration are reflected in pupils' actions. Pupils are pleased when others succeed and willingly encourage one another. Whether representing the school at sporting events, performing in productions or sharing achievements in assembly, pupils learn the importance of teamwork, resilience and recognising the achievements of others.

Pupils learn about different people, families and communities through the personal development curriculum. They discuss important issues in an age-appropriate way and learn about respect, equality and the importance of treating others fairly. These experiences help pupils develop an awareness of communities and experiences beyond their local area.

Leaders support pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing effectively. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and enjoy being active. They learn how to stay safe, including online, and know who to speak to if they need help.

These experiences help pupils become increasingly confident, independent and ready to play an active role in the communities of which they are part.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Published outcomes vary from year to year because cohort sizes are small. For this reason, pupils' achievement is best understood through the quality of their work over time and what current pupils know, remember and can do.

Pupils' achievement is not consistently secure across the school. Some pupils build their knowledge and skills securely over time. This is not the case for all pupils. Important gaps in learning remain for some pupils, particularly where key skills such as spelling, punctuation, handwriting and number facts are not secure. This makes it harder for them to build on previous learning and progress. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning.

Recent changes to parts of the curriculum, including mathematics, show that leaders recognise where improvements are needed. Leaders are also developing how they monitor pupils' achievement. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders have developed a curriculum that sets out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Leaders have adapted this curriculum to meet the needs of mixed-age classes, where pupils from different year groups learn together. However, recent changes to some subjects mean that staff are still developing their understanding of how these areas should be taught. As a result, pupils' experiences vary.

This is evident when comparing different subjects. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's approach to phonics, where teaching follows established routines. However, in mathematics, leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum because previous approaches had not secured pupils' learning well enough. This work is at an early stage and staff are still developing confidence in delivering it consistently well.

The school does not always identify gaps in pupils' learning and misconceptions consistently well. Across different subjects, errors in spelling, punctuation, handwriting and presentation are not addressed routinely. Staff do not always check that essential knowledge and skills are secure before introducing new learning. Although pupils who need additional support receive some help, classroom adaptations vary in their effectiveness. Plans to strengthen writing are also at an early stage and it is too soon to see their full impact.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders and governors are committed to improving the school. They have begun to address areas that need further development. The systems used to check how well improvements are working are not yet thorough enough. This means that any weaknesses are not always identified quickly enough. Leaders and governors do not have a clear enough picture of whether changes are improving pupils' experiences in school.

This is evident in the curriculum. Leaders have recently introduced changes in areas such as mathematics and identified writing as a priority for improvement. Differences in teaching, assessment and the development of important skills have not always been identified quickly enough. As a result, pupils do not experience learning as consistently as leaders intend.

Leaders' knowledge of pupils, families and daily school life helps the school run smoothly. Some aspects of school improvement depend too heavily on this detailed understanding. Systems for tracking pupils' achievement, checking the quality of education and reviewing the success of improvement work are not developed well enough. Information gathered through checks is not always used effectively to bring about improvement.

Governors are supportive of the school and understand the challenges faced by a small village setting. They are aware of the areas that need to improve. However, they do not always use the information available to them well enough to check whether actions are improving outcomes for pupils. This limits their ability to challenge leaders effectively and hold them fully to account.

Leaders and governors are developing links with other schools, organisations and professionals. These partnerships provide opportunities to learn from others and refine the school's work. External advice has informed recent developments. At times, this guidance is not adapted sufficiently to meet the specific needs of the school's small mixed-age setting.

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

The school's values of care, challenge and celebration shape everyday experiences. Pupils show care through the way they welcome others, include their peers and look out for one another. They embrace challenge by taking on leadership responsibilities and trying new experiences. Celebration is an important part of school life. Pupils enjoy sharing their achievements in assemblies, representing the school at events and recognising each other's successes. As a result, pupils learn that effort, participation and contribution are valued.

Pupils enjoy being part of a community where everyone knows each other well. New pupils settle quickly and become part of school life. Older pupils look after younger children at playtimes, support them around the school site and help them join in with activities. Younger pupils value this support and know there is always someone they can turn to. These relationships help pupils of different ages build confidence and develop a sense of responsibility for one another.

Despite its small size, the school provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their interests and talents. Pupils participate in sports competitions, performances, clubs and community events. Many take on roles such as monitors, buddies, house captains and school council representatives. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, leadership skills and resilience. They learn how to work with others, make decisions and contribute positively to the life of the school.

Adults know pupils well and care about their welfare. Pupils feel safe and trust adults to help them if they have concerns. They behave well and show consideration for others. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They are proud to play an active role in both the school and village community. This helps them develop a sense of belonging and understand the positive contribution they can make to the lives of others.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should strengthen strategic oversight and quality assurance across the school so that they have a clearer understanding of what is working well, where improvement is needed and whether actions are leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders should strengthen how they identify inconsistencies in teaching, assessment, classroom adaptations and the development of key skills more precisely, and take timely action to improve pupils' learning and outcomes.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning, have access to agreed and effective adaptations consistently so that pupils' gaps in learning reduce and pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders and governors should strengthen their oversight so that improvement work is better matched to the needs of the school's small mixed-age setting and leads to sustained improvement.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Reverend Brenda Brundritt.

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

The inspection took place on 15 and 16 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, the school special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, school teachers and other staff, parents, carers and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors also reviewed parent and staff surveys.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Marne Reynecke-Raybould

Lead inspector:
Sarah Stevens, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
David Piercy, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

58
Well 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

105
Well 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)

13.79%
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

3.45%
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

17.24%
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

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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	20%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	77%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	60%	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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	30%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	92%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	40%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	86%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	43%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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

‘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	29%	68%	-39 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	86%	80%	6 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	43%	78%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	43%	80%	-37 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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)	2.4%	13.0%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	15.2%	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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