

St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley

Address: Elmham Road, Beetley, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4BW

Unique reference number (URN): 121011

Inspection report: 30 June 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance is in line with schools nationally. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders analyse and track attendance in great detail. They then provide an individualised approach for different families to support pupils attending more regularly. The school uses legal routes appropriately and works with the local authority to support pupils who have additional barriers to attending. Pupils are normally on time for school and start practising their learning, in either mathematics or writing, straight away.

Behaviour has clearly improved since the previous inspection. The school is a calm and focused place. The expectations of how pupils will behave are very clear, for example how they line up, how they walk around the school and listen in class. The number of incidents of challenging behaviour has reduced. Bullying is rare. Pupils understand what bullying is and are confident that the adults will resolve any problems. Pupils are clear that the school is a space where discrimination is not accepted and everyone is welcome. They warmly celebrate each other's achievements, both from in and out of school.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years are fully part of the school. Their curriculum has been well considered to ensure that it prepares children for the topics that they will learn about in Year 1 and beyond. There has been a high priority on developing children's vocabulary and spoken language. Staff weave questioning and new words into children's play and other activities. As a result, children talk confidently to each other and adults. The Reception class has also emphasised working together, which has resulted in children being able to play well together and take turns.

Children are monitored closely in their first few months in the school, to help identify any special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children with SEND make sound progress in their year in the Reception class as a result of focused work on their individual needs. There is close working with parents and carers of all children. Children are well cared for.

Children generally achieve well. As with the rest of the school, writing is the area that children could be doing even better in. Leaders recognise this and have introduced a greater emphasis on early fine motor skills and letter formation as a result.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that any additional needs that pupils may have are identified from a range of sources, including discussions with teachers and parental concerns. The school is further developing systems to ensure the views of parents and carers are recorded and taken account of when reviewing support. In the early years, children are closely monitored when they start school to identify any needs.

Pupil premium and other funding sources are used effectively to target support for those who need it most. The school invests in providing regular dedicated time for leaders and teachers to discuss how all pupils are doing and plan for additional interventions or other adaptations to help them reach their potential. Overall, pupils are making progress, but as with all pupils, some disadvantaged pupils still have previous gaps in learning that they are still filling.

Leaders ensure that teachers use a range of ways to help pupils. These include different resources in the classroom or extra teaching time. Leaders regularly discuss any pupils who might have other barriers to learning and/or wellbeing and target support as needed, for example by ensuring pupils have time with staff trained in pastoral support.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors know their school well. They have rightly prioritised actions since the previous inspection, for example ensuring that behaviour expectations are consistent and embedded. They have made sure that the curriculum in place guarantees pupils learn the right content for their age. They have put in place a wide-ranging, evidence-based professional development programme that is bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching. Leaders and governors ensure that all decisions about changes to the school are made in the best interests of pupils.

Governors know the school well and retain the strategic level of challenge and support for leadership. They ensure that statutory duties are met. Leaders at all levels engage with external organisations and specialists, for example working closely with the local authority writing partnership, to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff, including those new to teaching, feel well supported and state that their workload is taken into account. They are appreciative of changes made since the previous inspection and work done so far on curriculum development and helping them to further develop their expertise as teachers.

There are constructive relationships with parents and carers. Parents talk about how the school feels like a community. Their support is evident, for example around 200 to 300 family members came to support pupils on sports day.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The curriculum for personal development is known as relationships and life skills (RLS). The RLS curriculum is taught every week using appropriate materials. Leaders check on the quality of the RLS programme to ensure it is having the impact they intend. Pupils' work shows that they are reflective and engage with challenging discussions in a positive and open way. Much of the work in the RLS curriculum is completed by discussion as a class, and those who need additional help to access this get this. They learn about different ways of life and world cultures beyond their location in rural Norfolk. They are open and welcoming to new pupils, whatever their background.

The impact of the personal development programme is shown in the pupils' behaviour towards each other. They are kind and polite. They support and cheer on each other, even

when things get tough. They understand fundamental British values and practise those, such as democracy by electing house captains. These house captains are proud of their roles and enjoy supporting the staff in running whole-school events.

The RLS curriculum includes appropriate relationships education. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and engage in thoughtful discussions about safety online, for example when taking part in online games. The school offers additional pastoral support for pupils who need this.

The pupils' curriculum is enhanced by activities beyond the classroom that enrich their learning. They make the most of the local area, with differing natural settings and a museum. Children in the early years love exploring the school's own meadow, finding newts and frogs and learning about their habitats. Pupils take part in sporting fixtures elsewhere in the county. Leaders track the participation of pupils to ensure that everyone, including those who are vulnerable, gets the same opportunities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over the last 3 years, too many pupils have left the school without the appropriate knowledge and skills for their age, particularly in writing. This has begun to improve, but pupils still do not achieve as well as they could. Across the school, writing is often pupils' weaker area. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils generally achieve better standards in reading, including in the phonics screening check. Achievement in mathematics, including the Year 4 multiplication check, is improving. However, leaders know that this improvement needs to be sustained over time.

Generally, children leave the early years ready for Year 1, although writing is the area that they could be even more secure in to better support them making stronger progress in writing in older year groups.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted a curriculum that ensures that all pupils are taught the appropriate content, in the right sequence, for their age. The resources available support teachers' knowledge so that they can deliver the curriculum. How well the curriculum is taught varies across the school. Leaders are working with teachers to make this of a more consistently high standard.

Leaders adapted the English curriculum so that texts match the topics in other subjects where appropriate. This means that pupils are highly enthused to write and do so at length. However, pupils' knowledge and use of some of the basics of writing is not as well developed as it should be. Too many pupils have weak handwriting and letter formation. Their use of basic punctuation and spelling is not as good as it needs to be. Teachers have

not checked on this knowledge through the school, which has left Year 6 catching up on the grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge expected for their age.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. This has resulted in pupils having the right skills to read for pleasure. Teachers identify pupils who need additional help with reading and ensure they are given support to help them catch up. The school knows that pupils' knowledge of some basic mathematics facts, such as multiplication tables, was weaker. Teachers have introduced additional opportunities for pupils to practise using this knowledge so that they can remember it. The impact of this on improving pupils' mathematical knowledge is still at an early stage.

The school makes sure that all pupils access the same curriculum as their peers wherever possible, albeit with adaptations made. Appropriate adaptations are made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils where necessary. However, they experience the same variability in the quality of teaching as their classmates.

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

Pupils are enthusiastic to learn. They talk with great confidence about all the things they have learned about. Pupils are happy and really supportive of peers, for example when someone makes a mistake in class discussion. Older pupils help take care of the younger ones and enjoy their responsibilities, such as running the 'craze of the week' at lunchtimes. The warm relationship between staff and pupils is clear, welcoming them at the door each day. Bullying is rare. Pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they are worried about something. They are confident that staff will sort out any problems. Pupils attend well.

Pupils have not always achieved as well as they ought to by the time they leave the school. They are doing better than in the past, but for too many pupils, their writing is not yet of the standard expected for their age. This is because too many pupils do not form letters correctly and forget to use punctuation or check spellings. However, pupils are incredibly enthused to write. They write at speed and produce lots of writing in subjects across the curriculum. This is because they really enjoy the topics they learn about. Leaders make sure that the curriculum is enhanced by experiences beyond the classroom, including making good use of the different natural places on their doorstep. This includes children in the early years, who enjoy exploring in the school meadow.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs met well. Those pupils who need it benefit from precisely targeted extra support to help them make progress. The school is highly aware of other pupils with barriers to learning and works very closely with pupils and their parents and carers to reduce these.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching improves pupils' basic writing skills in letter formation, handwriting, spelling and the use of punctuation.

- Leaders should ensure that the revised approach to teaching basic mathematics knowledge, such as multiplication tables, results in pupils having secure knowledge of these.
 - Leaders should ensure that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 increases.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors are Jean Johnson and Linda Talbot.

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 school leaders, governors, a local authority officer, staff, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

There is a separately run and registered pre-school operating on the same site. There is a separately run and registered before- and after-school club that operates on the school premises.

Headteacher: Tanya Treavett

Lead inspector:

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rob Edwards, Ofsted Inspector

Jules Stops, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

171

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: 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)

20.47%

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: 26.3%

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

2.34%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.36%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	32%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	28%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	21%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	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	44%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	28%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	21%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	72%	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	58%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

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

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

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	12%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	29%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	17%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	33%	60%	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	29%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	35%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	59%	Below

‘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	12%	68%	-56 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	69%	-69 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	66%	-50 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	29%	80%	-50 pp
2024/25 (final)	17%	81%	-64 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	33%	78%	-45 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	29%	78%	-48 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	78%	-78 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	35%	80%	-44 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	17%	79%	-63 pp

‘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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.9%	5.9%	Below

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)	9.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	16.2%	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.

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