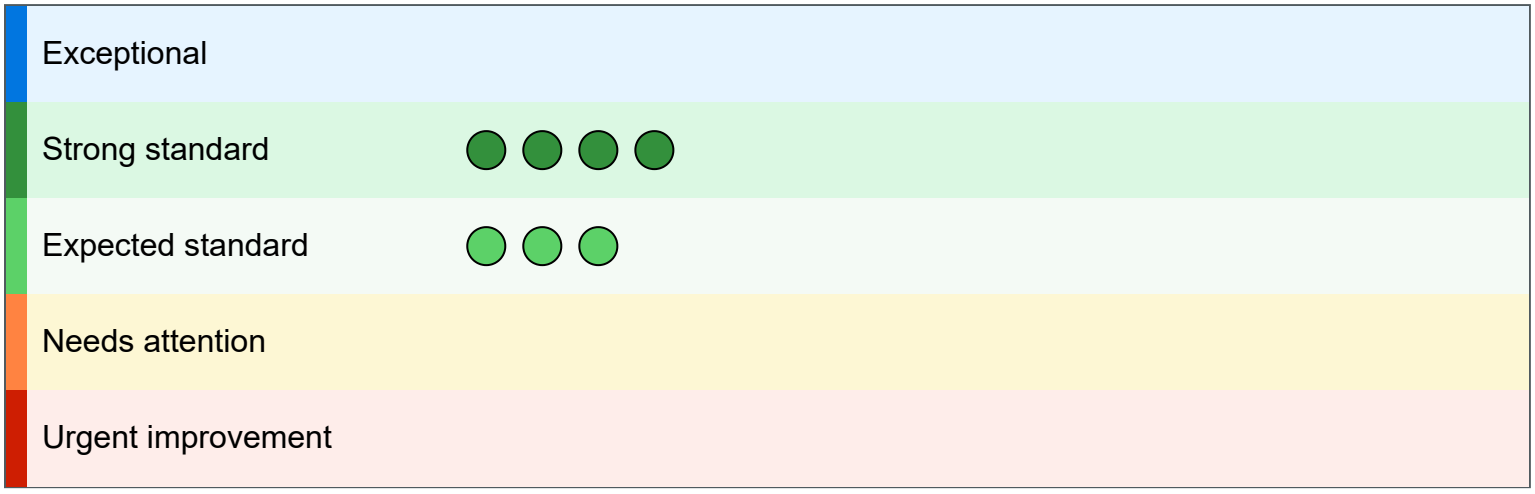
Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy

Address: Rider Haggard Way, Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk, NR35 2RE

Unique reference number (URN): 140545

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

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders maintain a clear focus on promoting high attendance. They make it clear that attendance is everyone's responsibility. Leaders track attendance closely and understand the factors that prevent some pupils from attending regularly. When needed, they quickly provide effective support for pupils and their families. This support is usually tailored to individual needs. Leaders review and refine this support when necessary. As a result, absence and persistent absence have remained below national figures over the last 3 years. This demonstrates leaders' success in reducing barriers and helping pupils attend school every day.

Leaders set high standards for behaviour. They ensure that these expectations are upheld throughout the school. Staff maintain a positive learning environment that supports pupils' learning. As a result, pupils behave very well in lessons and at other times during the school day. They show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils understand what is expected of them and meet these expectations consistently. Incidents of bullying, discrimination and other unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare. When concerns arise, leaders take prompt action. They analyse behaviour information carefully to identify emerging patterns. When required, staff provide timely support and appropriate adaptations for pupils who need additional guidance. This support helps pupils become more resilient and self-aware.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders place inclusion at the centre of the school's work. They have a detailed understanding of the potential barriers that some pupils face. They use this knowledge to shape support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face additional barriers to learning receive appropriate support. This enables them to access the curriculum and school life successfully. Leaders use relevant research to inform decisions about how best to allocate additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This enables them to engage fully in school life and access a wide range of experiences and opportunities.

Well-established systems enable staff to identify pupils' needs accurately and at the earliest opportunity. These embedded processes underpin leaders' work. They ensure that staff receive effective training and guidance. As a result, staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to support pupils with SEND and those facing additional barriers to learning.

Leaders maintain rigorous oversight of provision and review its effectiveness frequently. They work closely with external professionals, the trust and families to review and strengthen support when needed. Staff respond effectively when pupils' needs change. For example, they place a high emphasis on promoting independence to prepare pupils for secondary school. As a result, pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed for future success and achieve well, despite additional challenges.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders provide effective leadership across all aspects of the school's work. This includes middle leaders, who 'step up' proactively when needed. Leaders are committed to doing the best they can for all pupils. As a result, they have a secure understanding of the school's effectiveness. Leaders evaluate all aspects of the school's work accurately and identify the right priorities for improvement.

Staff value the support provided by leaders and the trust. They describe leaders as approachable, professional and supportive. Leaders communicate clearly and regularly. Consequently, staff understand expectations and feel well informed about the school's direction.

Leaders and the trust invest in developing leadership across the school. They create opportunities for staff to learn from one another and build their expertise. For example, teachers from different schools work together and share effective practice. This strengthens professional relationships and helps to improve teaching further.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties effectively. The trust and governors provide both support and challenge for school leaders. They maintain close oversight of important aspects of the school's work. These include safeguarding, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the curriculum and financial management.

Staff wellbeing remains a clear priority. Leaders take practical steps to support staff and respond to their views. Regular conversations, opportunities to raise concerns and meaningful follow-up actions help staff feel valued. The trust also reviews staff wellbeing routinely through surveys and feedback. Leaders act on this information when improvements are identified. As a result, staff appreciate the support they receive and report positive levels of wellbeing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have established an embedded culture of personal development and wellbeing that reflects the school's caring and inclusive ethos. They ensure that pastoral support is responsive and very closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are confident in seeking help when required. Staff identify concerns early and provide highly effective support. As a result, pupils feel valued and supported and are consistently ready to learn.

The personal development programme is broad and well sequenced. It has a positive impact on pupils' character development and readiness for life beyond school. Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about healthy relationships, empathy, respect, children's rights, the law and fundamental British values. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of online and offline safety. They know how to manage risks, identify trusted adults and respond appropriately to situations that make them uncomfortable. Learning promotes acceptance of different family structures and helps pupils develop empathy and understanding of others.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength. They contribute positively to school life through the school council, the Shining Group, assemblies and charitable activities. They understand the purpose of fundraising and participate in projects that support both local and national causes. Community links, including work with a local care home, help pupils develop compassion, understanding and social awareness.

Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of equality, diversity and democracy. They can explain the importance of voting and recognise that democratic freedoms are not enjoyed everywhere. Pupils understand and believe that people should be treated fairly, regardless of their differences. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for future learning and life in modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate fully in the wider life of the school. They monitor participation carefully and remove barriers through practical support and tailored adjustments. Focused support and providing time to talk help vulnerable pupils develop confidence, resilience and positive learning behaviours.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils learn the core skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to build on their previous knowledge. Pupils become confident readers. They quickly learn letter sounds through phonics. This begins promptly in the early years. Timely support helps children to catch up quickly when they have important gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional barriers to learning typically achieve well from their various starting points. Pupils are proud of the work they produce. They talk with growing confidence about what they have learned across a range of subjects.

Pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' achievement in key stage 2 national assessments has been broadly in line with national averages. In addition, leaders' actions have contributed to improved outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum sets out an ambitious learning journey. It is appropriately sequenced. Leaders have ensured that essential knowledge is clearly identified across all subjects. As a result, pupils have opportunities to build on their learning from the early years onwards.

Teachers demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge and confidence. Within lessons, they use a range of teaching approaches and make effective adaptations. This helps to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, can access the curriculum.

Leaders understand the strengths and areas for development in the curriculum and teaching. They evaluate these accurately and act promptly when improvements are needed. Recent improvements have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement in arithmetic and phonics. However, leaders recognise that staff need further guidance to adapt the curriculum more precisely. Leaders organise staff effectively and direct resources carefully. This helps to strengthen provision across the school.

Teaching supports pupils to develop key knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff deliver early reading through a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Pupils read books that match the sounds and letters they know. When pupils need extra help, staff provide effective support quickly. This helps pupils keep up with their learning. As a result, many pupils read with increasing fluency and growing confidence.

Early years **Expected standard**

Leaders have established consistent routines and clear expectations across the early years. Staff apply these well. Children settle quickly and begin learning promptly. The environment is calm and nurturing. This contributes to the children feeling confident and ready to learn.

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum that supports children's development across all areas of learning. Activities build logically on prior knowledge and experiences. Staff use children's interests effectively to encourage engagement. Children participate enthusiastically in a wide range of learning opportunities. Staff make effective use of indoor and outdoor spaces to promote exploration and play. Children work and learn together confidently. They develop their communication skills through regular interaction with adults and their peers.

Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities appropriately. They adapt activities effectively and ensure that children can access learning successfully. Leaders maintain regular communication with parents and carers. This helps families contribute to children's learning and development. Children who need additional support are fully included in daily routines and activities.

Reading is a priority. Staff introduce phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Children develop the knowledge and skills needed for reading. Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points and are appropriately prepared for Year 1.

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

The school's vision of 'Working together, with the light of compassion, respect and truth, so that all can shine' has a positive impact on pupils' experiences. Staff, governors and trust leaders promote this vision consistently.

Pupils have established positive, trusting relationships with staff and each other. Pupils work and play together respectfully across age groups. Older pupils routinely include younger pupils in games and activities. This is a notable strength. Pupils know the qualities of being

a good friend. For example, they understand the importance of treating others as they would like to be treated themselves.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, typically achieve well from their starting points. Achievement in national assessments has been broadly in line with national averages over the last 3 years. Outcomes in the phonics screening check and multiplication tables check have improved over the same period. Children in the early years settle quickly into established routines. They develop the core skills needed for early reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils talk confidently about previous learning in subjects such as geography, history and science.

Pupils participate in a broad range of experiences beyond the classroom. They take part in clubs, leadership roles, performances, charitable activities and projects with the local community. Pupils develop a secure understanding of democracy, equality and respect. They show appreciation for different cultures, religions, family structures and beliefs. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils behave very well and show strong self-discipline. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Pupils say they feel safe and trust adults to help them if they have concerns. Staff address behaviour concerns promptly and effectively. Attendance is high for all groups of pupils, and persistent absence is very low. As a result, pupils attend school regularly and benefit fully from the curriculum and wider opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to provide support for teachers so that they adapt the curriculum and their teaching to ensure pupils build more securely on their previous learning in a range of subjects.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Oliver Burwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beverly Tilman.

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.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, including the executive headteacher and head of school, staff, local governors, pupils and parents. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the deputy CEO and trustees, during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Heather Brand

Lead inspector:
Benjamin Axon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Jonathan Rockey, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

65
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

140
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)

18.46%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.5%

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

3.08%
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

9.23%
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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	45%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	100%	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)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	100%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	100%	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)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	100%	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 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S

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 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

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)	4.5%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	9.8%	14.4%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	3.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.8%	14.6%	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.

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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