

Orchard Primary School

Address: Holcroft Road, E9 7BB

Unique reference number (URN): 100234

Inspection report: 18 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

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

How we evaluate safeguarding

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

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

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils develop the knowledge that they need across reading, writing and mathematics to be very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop detailed and secure knowledge and communication skills from their starting points across the school. This supports their readiness to learn well and build knowledge across the curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve highly.

This positive picture is also apparent in achievement in national tests and examinations. Pupils achieve above-average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils outperform their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. It is clear that the school's work to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their barriers or when they join the school, develop strong foundational knowledge, with any gaps identified and closed quickly.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance expectations and procedures are rigorous, robust and embedded. Current attendance figures show the impact of leaders' tenacious oversight. Leaders work successfully with parents so that pupils attend well. Leaders and staff prioritise attendance so that all pupils access the rich learning provided at the school.

Pupils behave very well. Leaders have created a culture of high expectation, which makes clear that bullying is not tolerated. Routines are embedded; pupils know what is expected and they rise to this. Classrooms are calm and organised places where learning is at the heart. Disruption is rare. Highly positive behaviour is not only seen in lessons, but across all aspects of school and at social times. Playtimes are organised and well supervised. Any behaviour incidents are tracked closely, and staff act on things quickly to ensure that their very high standards are maintained. Any support needed for individuals is closely interwoven with the school's pastoral offer to ensure maximum impact.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

The curriculum is ambitious, and leaders place no ceiling on what pupils can achieve. Learning is well sequenced and clearly breaks down important knowledge and vocabulary for pupils to learn. This is consistent across all subjects, from Nursery to Year 6. Enrichment activities are carefully interwoven to bring this learning to life, and meet the needs of the school community, for example the school's 'gardening curriculum'. This deepens and extends science learning across the school, while also connecting pupils to nature.

Leaders ensure that teachers are well trained, and as a result, they teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers also assess pupils' understanding skilfully as they move through each lesson. Feedback 'in the moment' ensures that any gaps and misconceptions are addressed before pupils move on to more complex work.

Building and embedding the core fundamentals of reading, writing and mathematics is a priority and a strength of the school's work. This journey starts in the early years to make sure these skills are secure so children can build on this in Year 1. The focus on making sure that pupils master these skills prepares them very well for key stage 2. It helps them to access other subjects more easily, as they can focus clearly on that subject's specific content.

Early years

Strong standard 

The early years environment is a joyous place to be, and as a result, children are highly engaged in learning, both indoors and outdoors. Staff have bespoke training to maximise the impact of their interactions with children. This helps to develop language and communication effectively. The school builds children's independence from their first days in school by uniquely celebrating each child. Children access a breadth of opportunities to extend language and knowledge, with play-based activities supporting children's all-round development.

The curriculum is ambitious. Expectations are never lowered. Leaders and staff are passionate about the importance of effective provision from the moment children start school. The curriculum is designed to bridge gaps, correct misconceptions and build the necessary foundations in reading and phonics, writing and number. Staff achieve this carefully and systematically, ensuring gaps are closed. This particularly benefits children with much-lower-than-average starting points. Children have the knowledge they need by the end of Reception to be very well prepared for the next stages of their learning in Year 1. For those who struggle with this, leaders work effectively with parents and outside agencies, such as speech therapists, to get children the help they need.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

This is an inclusive school with a strong understanding of the community it serves. Leaders ensure that all pupils achieve and thrive. Through rigorous procedures and effective allocation of pupil premium funding, pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately.

The school provides staff with regular training so they have the knowledge they need to support all children, including those with the highest levels of need. Leaders work with a range of external partners to assure themselves that their systems, procedures and interventions are suitable and effective. This work is used skilfully to provide both disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with the help they need.

Staff are acutely aware of pupils' individual challenges and use this insight to tailor the support they provide. This support is carefully tracked to make sure it is effective, helping pupils with SEND to progress well from their starting points. The strong pastoral offer is part of this provision, and disadvantaged pupils, and those with SEND, benefit most highly from this.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders' understanding of the school's context and its challenges is insightful and rigorous. They know what is working well and what actions are needed to strengthen their practice further across all aspects of school life, including in inclusion and learning. Governors are committed to the vision and ethos of the school, and have a detailed awareness of the school's priorities. They fulfil their statutory duties and have clear systems and procedures in place to provide them with the information they need to assure themselves that leaders are acting in the best interests of children. Current priorities include further strengthening and refining their offer for the pupils with the highest levels of need.

Staff, including those new to the profession, are very positive about working in the school. They talk of it being a 'changed place'. This marks a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Staff appreciate the professional learning provided, which is tailored to both their needs and the needs of the pupils in school. They feel they have the knowledge and resources they need to teach pupils effectively.

Leaders are outward-looking and share their 'best practice' more widely with the local authority. This work has included a borough eco-curriculum and sharing procedures to improve attendance with other schools.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school's personal development offer is incredibly rich and well considered. Pupils contribute significantly to its success. It is the golden thread that ties all other aspects of the school's ethos and culture together. Leaders are committed to this being highly ambitious and varied to provide all pupils, including the high number of disadvantaged pupils, with a rich set of experiences. The enrichment offer is used to support behaviour through specialist therapy, to build life skills through learning to cycle and to enrich learning. School life is enriched with half-termly trips, including a trip abroad. This work does not end within the school, but also permeates into the community through school leadership roles, for example planting trees in Hackney. This offer prepares pupils very well for their next steps and life in modern Britain.

The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is comprehensive and prepares pupils for life beyond school. Leaders review it regularly and update as needed to meet pupils' needs. Pupils learn about, and revisit, a range of themes over time to deepen their understanding of moral and social issues as they get older. This is woven seamlessly into the wider personal development offer and through the school's values of equality, pride, resilience, independence, honesty and ambition. These are realised by the whole school community and as a result, pupils are respectful, reflective and recognise the importance of wellbeing and kindness. For example, class councils lead weekly sessions to discuss themes in class, leading to class wellbeing activities. Pupils are articulate about the need to have positive mental health and how this can be achieved.

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

Pupils flourish here. They are happy and safe. This is a school with clear routines and systems that enable the achievement of all pupils, both academically and in their all-round development.

Behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and when moving around the school and at social times. Classrooms are calm and focused on learning. Lessons are not disrupted. Pupils are positive about behaviour. They understand and meet the school's high expectations. Pupils are kind to each other and are not worried about bullying. They say that on the rare occasions that there may be unkindness, staff deal with this quickly and effectively.

The support for pupils' broader development is highly enriching. Pupils experience a range of wider curriculum opportunities, for example a trip to Tenerife to experience culture and language, to enhance their learning of Spanish. Older pupils learn to ride a bike. The school supports them to explore bike routes to secondary schools to enable them to ride confidently when they start in Year 7.

Learning is highly effective. Pupils learn a curriculum that is designed well so that they build successfully on what they have learned before. This helps them to know and remember more over time across the whole curriculum. All pupils do well here. This is reflected in national tests, where pupils who are disadvantaged do better than their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their learning and for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
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About this inspection

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

The school is part of a federation called The Viridis Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Primary Schools.

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 leaders, governors and members of staff during the inspection.

Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Executive headteacher, Headteacher: Stephen O'Brien, Felicity Headen

Lead inspector:

Samantha Ingram, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Andrea Bedeau, His Majesty's Inspector

Kieran Bird, His Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Ross, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 18 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

531

Well above 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

630

Well above 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)

58.57%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

6.03%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.33%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above 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	80%	61%	Above
2024/25	87%	62%	Above
2023/24	84%	61%	Above
2022/23	69%	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	90%	74%	Above
2024/25	93%	75%	Above
2023/24	95%	74%	Above
2022/23	83%	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	87%	72%	Above
2024/25	88%	72%	Above
2023/24	89%	72%	Above
2022/23	85%	71%	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	91%	73%	Above
2024/25	92%	74%	Above
2023/24	95%	73%	Above
2022/23	86%	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	76%	46%	Above
2024/25	83%	47%	Above
2023/24	81%	46%	Above
2022/23	68%	44%	Above

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	90%	62%	Above
2024/25	91%	63%	Above
2023/24	98%	62%	Above
2022/23	81%	60%	Above

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	86%	59%	Above
2024/25	86%	59%	Above
2023/24	85%	58%	Above
2022/23	88%	58%	Above

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	91%	60%	Above
2024/25	91%	61%	Above
2023/24	93%	59%	Above
2022/23	88%	59%	Above

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	76%	68%	9 pp
2024/25	83%	69%	14 pp
2023/24	81%	67%	14 pp
2022/23	68%	66%	1 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	90%	80%	10 pp
2024/25	91%	81%	11 pp
2023/24	98%	80%	18 pp
2022/23	81%	78%	3 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	86%	78%	9 pp
2024/25	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24	85%	78%	8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	88%	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	91%	80%	11 pp
2024/25	91%	81%	11 pp
2023/24	93%	79%	13 pp
2022/23	88%	79%	9 pp

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 (1 term)	5.0%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	6.1%	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 (1 term)	12.8%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	11.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	17.6%	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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