

Lympne Church of England Primary School

Address: Octavian Drive, Lympne, Hythe, Kent, CT21 4JG

Unique reference number (URN): 118680

Inspection report: 3 February 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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum. Throughout the school, all pupils build secure foundations in their reading, spelling, handwriting and understanding of number facts. Where gaps appear in pupils' knowledge, staff identify and address these quickly. Effective adaptations ensure that all pupils can succeed and make progress through the planned curriculum. This is reflected in published outcomes that are typically above the national average. Where there have been areas that pupils have achieved less well, leaders have taken swift and appropriate action to ensure that gaps have narrowed.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. The school ensures that barriers to learning and wellbeing are reduced for these pupils. As a result, they make progress that is above the national average.

Alongside academic progress, pupils develop social and emotional skills well. As a result of the school's work, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a relentless focus on increasing pupils' attendance. This has secured high attendance rates over time. Where absence rates have increased for individuals and groups such as those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders' work has resulted in improvements. Their work ensures that pupils attend regularly and benefit fully from the school's ambitious curriculum.

Leaders have established a calm, orderly and respectful environment. This supports pupils to thrive. Pupils' behaviour and the respect they show for one another is impressive. A supportive behaviour approach is embedded across the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and nurturing, creating a culture where pupils feel safe, supported and cared for. Bullying is not tolerated. Staff act quickly and effectively to address any concerns, ensuring that discrimination, harassment or abuse are not tolerated.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, showing resilience and respect. They actively support each other to be involved in learning and when playing together during social times. Pupils become confident, reflective and independent during their time at the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and teaching. They have refined the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and well designed. Leaders have built sequences of learning that develop pupils' knowledge over time across the whole school. They have carefully linked learning across subject areas. This supports pupils' knowledge to become embedded and secure. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding as they move through the planned curriculum.

Leaders have a focused approach to ensure that pupils secure strong foundations for learning. Early reading, vocabulary and phonics are taught well. This enables most pupils to learn to read effectively and access the wider curriculum. The school prioritises reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils gain the essential skills and knowledge they need to progress. Pupils quickly become fluent readers and mathematicians.

Leaders have ensured that staff have the necessary skills to deliver the curriculum well. They are ambitious for all pupils to access the same curriculum. Staff make appropriate adjustments and adaptations so that all pupils work towards the same end points. Staff make regular checks of pupils' understanding and address misconceptions quickly, using interventions when needed. Across the school, the careful planning and effective teaching ensure that pupils learn the intended curriculum and are well prepared for their next steps.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that children here have a strong start to their educational journey. Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for the children in the early years. The curriculum is considered carefully. It is refined and adapted to meet the needs and interests of the children.

Staff prioritise reading and phonics from the very start. Where pupils need extra support to secure this essential knowledge, it is provided swiftly. This supports pupils to catch up quickly. Staff have a clear focus on developing children's communication and vocabulary. They engage children in high-quality interactions that extend their knowledge and address gaps in learning. Leaders actions are carefully considered and ensure that there are opportunities for children to practise and apply their learning through play.

Children are well supported into Reception and from Reception into Year 1. Partnerships and positive relationships with parents and carers are a strength. These help children settle quickly and form positive relationships with staff. Children thrive and achieve well across the curriculum. They leave Reception having developed the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in Year 1. They are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

An inclusive culture permeates the school. Leaders have ensured that staff have the knowledge to be able to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff benefit from effective training. They have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' needs. Staff use a range of strategies and adaptations consistently and effectively across the school. This reduces any barriers to pupils' learning. Staff support pupils very well to learn successfully. Pupils play an active part in the life of the school.

The school has implemented, refined and embedded strategies to assess pupils' learning and development. These are highly effective. Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and carers to understand and address pupils' individual needs. Staff closely track and monitor progress that pupils make, including pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. Any pupils who require support benefit from timely and effective interventions.

Leaders ensure that staff are well informed about any needs or barriers to learning that pupils who are disadvantaged may have. They rigorously monitor their progress. Leaders use this information effectively to make carefully considered decisions about the use of pupil premium funding.

As a result of the school's inclusive work, pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged achieve very well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school, grounded in their deep understanding of the school's context. They know the school very well and place strong emphasis on delivering high-quality education through a well-planned curriculum. They ensure that the school is a learning community for everyone. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' social and personal development as well as their academic achievement.

Leaders have developed a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise in which staff take responsibility for their own learning. The high-quality training programme is informed by research and evidence. This builds staff's confidence and teaching expertise, enabling all pupils to have consistently positive experiences in school. This ensures that everyone flourishes in the warm, collaborative ethos.

Staff are highly positive about the support they receive. They appreciate leaders' commitment to supporting their workload and wellbeing. Leaders act as strong role models, and staff express pride in being part of the school community. They feel valued and trusted and are highly committed to doing their very best for pupils.

Governors play an active and strategic role in school life. Their strong oversight gives them a clear view of the school's work and the difference it makes to pupils. This helps governors to focus on the right priorities to drive improvement. Their involvement provides very effective support for the whole school community. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and the support that it provides for them and their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders are very ambitious for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. The comprehensive and deliberately planned personal development programme is embedded across the school.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets statutory requirements for relationships, sex and health education. Pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge of this programme. They have a deep understanding of personal safety, including online, as well as identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships, consent and active lifestyles.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' character is highly effective. Pupils know the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect. They know how these values positively contribute to making the school a warm and welcoming place. Pupils across the school take

on leadership roles. Older pupils take great pride in the support they provide to the youngest pupils when they join the school.

The ethos of the school develops pupils' spiritually and moral values. Pupils have opportunities to pause and reflect as well as debate and consider the views of others. Pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of important British values. They understand how the rule of law keeps everyone safe and how democracy and individual liberty are applied within their school and the wider world. This helps them develop and grow as global citizens.

A range of carefully considered enrichment activities are provided across the school. All pupils have access to clubs, such as knitting, choir, and football, which help pupils to develop new skills and work collaboratively. Leaders carefully track participation, including for disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that all pupils can access and benefit from the opportunities.

Leaders' deep understanding of pupils and the wider school community enables them to identify pupils requiring additional pastoral support quickly. Pupils and staff speak highly of this pastoral support, recognising its strength in reducing barriers to learning. This is highly effective in helping pupils to become resilient, confident and emotionally secure.

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

Pupils enjoy attending school. Kind and caring staff, who know pupils well, greet them warmly each day. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their learning and are proud of the high-quality work they produce. The school is full of pupils' work that celebrates their achievements and opportunities staff provide to 'Let your light shine'.

Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to school life. Older pupils take great pride in their work, supporting those in younger classes. They recognise the importance of taking responsibility and setting a good example to others. Pupils say the school is a safe and happy place to be. They know that there are staff that they can go to if they have a concern and that staff will support them if they are worried about something. Pupils do not consider bullying to be an issue because people treat each other fairly and with respect. The school's values of 'Friendship, Respect, Courage and Resilience' are evident throughout the day.

The school has a deeply embedded inclusive culture. As soon as pupils join the school, staff get to know them well and ensure that they are supported to become members of the school community. This enables leaders to identify and address any barriers to learning in an appropriate and timely manner. Pupils are supported to grow in confidence and maturity. The school fosters an environment in which pupils celebrate difference. This, together with a carefully designed and well-taught curriculum, helps all pupils to achieve well.

The school provides thoughtfully considered and purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of community in school, locally and across the wider world. This is enriched by participating in visits and events in the village and beyond. This helps them to learn about, and contribute towards, the world around them. It prepares pupils well for the next steps in their education and life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine and embed their identified priorities for improvement, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mrs Carolyn Chivers.

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 the headteacher and other leaders from the school during the inspection.

An inspector spoke with a group of governors.

An inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority. They also spoke with a diocesan representative.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. Its last section 48 inspection took place in July 2025.

The school currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision for pupils.

Headteacher: Mrs Melanie Nash

Lead inspector:

Simon Graydon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jody Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Graham Chisnell, Ofsted 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

202

Close to 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)

6.93%

Well below 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

1.49%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

7.92%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	72%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	60%	Close to average

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 (revised)	96%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	87%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	92%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average

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	73%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	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	91%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	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	73%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	91%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	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	73%	68%	5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	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	91%	80%	11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	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	73%	78%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	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	91%	80%	11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	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 (2 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	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 (2 term)	12.5%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	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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