

Corton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address: The Street, Corton, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5HW

Unique reference number (URN): 124727

Inspection report: 14 April 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils develop and secure the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In early reading, pupils confidently apply their phonics knowledge to read with increased fluency. Those who need additional support benefit from effective catch-up provision so that they keep pace with their peers. By the end of key stage 2, pupils typically demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in outcomes in national tests, which are typically close to the national averages.

Across the curriculum, pupils build and apply their knowledge well over time. They enjoying being able to write about and discuss their favourite topics in subjects, such as history. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional barriers to learning progress well. This is because the school identifies pupils' needs swiftly and ensures support is closely matched to pupils' needs.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders track attendance closely. They have established clear expectations for regular attendance and communicate these well to families. If attendance dips for particular pupils or groups, leaders respond quickly with support. They work closely with families and external agencies where needed. This includes carefully considered short-term adjustments that are reviewed regularly. As a result of leaders' work, dips in attendance are temporary, and attendance stays in line with national averages.

Pupils understand the school's expectations for their behaviour. They usually follow established routines well. This contributes to a calm and orderly environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. This help pupils to feel safe and supported. Pupils play well together and conduct themselves sensibly at social times. Bullying is very rare.

Staff support pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, effectively to regulate their behaviour and engage positively in learning. However, on occasion, routines and expectations for learning are not as embedded as they could be. This means that, at times, pupils do not settle as quickly or listen as attentively as they could.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a broad and ambitious curriculum that is well sequenced. This enables pupils to build knowledge and skills securely over time. The curriculum is carefully designed across subjects to support pupils to learn in mixed-age classes. Reading is prioritised well. Staff work together to ensure pupils quickly become successful and confident readers, mathematicians and writers.

Across the school, staff explain new learning clearly and use subject-specific vocabulary precisely. For example, in mathematics, pupils confidently use terms, such as 'tally' and 'division'. Teachers routinely revisit prior learning, which helps pupils remember and apply

prior knowledge. This is reflected in pupils' confidence, when discussing their learning and in the quality of their work. Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching well. They continue to embed their work to strengthen older pupils' ability to read and write with fluency.

Consistent classroom routines and established approaches to checking pupils' learning help pupils to secure and deepen their understanding. However, on occasion, opportunities to identify and address pupils' misconceptions are missed. Staff adapt teaching thoughtfully so that pupils, including those with additional needs, access the full curriculum successfully. For example, through additional adult support and carefully scaffolded resources.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clear vision for the early years, with a well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum that begins in Nursery and prepares children effectively for Year 1. Staff assess and identify children's needs early. They know all the children well. Staff adapt provision so that all children's learning can build securely over time. Children are well supported to develop early reading skills because staff are dedicated and well trained as reading experts. Consistent behaviour expectations ensure that children feel safe, focused and calm.

Staff engage children well. They use questioning and modelling expertly to extend children's vocabulary and language skills. Staff carefully plan activities to maximise children's opportunities to practise and apply key skills. For example, careful one-by-one counting. Staff ensure that all children know what to do and what is expected when they are working independently. This means that when children embark on their independent activities, they get the most out of them.

Story times and shared learning moments bring all children together and provide further opportunities to develop language, listening and attention. Teachers read with expression and children enjoy becoming familiar with stories. These shared experiences also help to build a sense of community and ensure that all children, including those with additional needs, access rich language and ideas.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school. Leaders identify pupils' needs swiftly and ensure that support is well matched to the barriers and challenges that pupils face. Staff know pupils and their families exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to help pupils take part fully in school life and to achieve alongside their peers. The school works effectively with families and external professionals, including the local authority, to secure the right support for pupils. This includes when their needs change or emerge over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn successfully because staff adapt support thoughtfully. This includes carefully targeted adult support, adapted resources and bespoke guidance. Leaders ensure that staff receive training that aligns with pupils' needs. Where needed, pupils with SEND are well supported to access learning, regulate their emotions and engage positively with others.

The school's calm and nurturing environment helps to reduce pupils' anxiety and supports their readiness to learn. Leaders make effective use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, to reduce barriers to pupils' learning and wider development successfully. This includes effective support for pupils' communication and language, and practical help for families where needed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school, with a strong focus on pupils' achievement and wellbeing. Leaders work with staff as a unified team and have taken purposeful action to improve the school since the previous inspection. For example, empowering teachers with time, support and knowledge to contribute to curriculum improvement. Governors share leaders' ambition for pupils. They understand the school's context and priorities, using this knowledge to provide effective support and challenges. Governors are proactive and respond quickly to support leaders when new priorities arise. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Staff appreciate the way that leaders and governors are supportive of their workload and wellbeing.

Leaders are rightly proud of their responsive approach to meetings pupils' needs as they change over time and in response to the school's context. Leaders train and deploy staff flexibly and work closely with families and external professionals. This joined-up approach is enacted consistently by staff. This is because leaders have fostered a collective commitment to doing the right thing for pupils that all staff are proud to be part of.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' thoughtful approach to pupils' personal development ensures that all pupils develop important knowledge and can take part in a range of experiences. Leaders track pupils' participation in the school's wider experiences closely. The personal, social and health curriculum is well sequenced and flexible. This allows staff to adapt lessons to meet pupils' needs. As a result, all pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They can explain the importance of healthy lifestyles and relationships. Pupils look forward to and appreciate visitors, who teach them important skills and knowledge for the future. For example, how to ride a bicycle safely.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of difference and respect. They learn about different beliefs and ways of life. Pupils also develop their understanding of the fundamental British values. Through discussions, pupils reflect thoughtfully on these themes and show respect for others' views. This supports pupils to embrace each other's uniqueness, develop positive friendships and work well together in the classroom.

The school provides effective pastoral support. Staff know pupils well and support their emotional wellbeing carefully. Targeted support, including from trained staff, helps pupils to manage their emotions. This support has a positive impact on pupils' confidence, behaviour and readiness to learn.

Pupils have opportunities to contribute to school life and develop responsibility. Older pupils are proud of their pupil leadership roles. Younger pupils enjoy the way their classroom responsibilities mean that they are helpful to their friends and their teachers. Pupils know

that their voice matters. The school has established positive links with the local community and ensures that opportunities are accessible to all pupils, including through targeted support where needed. Pupils are generally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of this calm and welcoming school. They feel safe, supported and valued. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff, who know them well. They help them to feel confident and ready to learn. Pupils behave well. They understand the routines and expectations that keep the school orderly. These help them to work hard in lessons and fill playtimes with friendship and fun. Pupils say that staff are always there for them if they have a worry or need to talk to someone. Pupils are confident that, on the very rare occasions that it happens, bullying is dealt with quickly and fairly.

Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. They are keen to talk about what they have learned and can use new vocabulary and ideas with confidence. Pupils achieve well. They are supported to overcome their barriers to learning by dedicated, caring and knowledgeable staff, so that they can succeed alongside their peers. This includes pupils with additional needs, who are included fully in school life.

Pupils value the opportunities thoughtful leaders have created for them beyond the classroom. They can take on a range of responsibilities. For example, school councillor, ambassador and librarian. Through these roles, pupils develop confidence, leadership skills and a keen sense of responsibility. Pupils also enjoy the wider life of the school. They relish taking part in events in the local community, including musical, sporting and creative activities.

Pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They learn about relationships, respect and different beliefs. They appreciate that people may have views that differ to their own. The school supports pupils to become thoughtful and reflective, treating each other with kindness.

Next steps

- Leaders should further strengthen the consistency of routines and expectations so that pupils listen attentively, settle quickly and sustain focus across all parts of the day.
 - Leaders should continue to embed the impact of their work, and the work of staff, on strengthening important foundational skills, such as writing, so that pupils consistently achieve well.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen assessment so that pupils' misconceptions are consistently picked up and acted on.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Nick Bailey.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff and a representative of the local authority and the diocese. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Norwich. Its last section 48 inspection was in February 2018.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery for 3- to 4-year-old children.

Headteacher: Nicola Rowland

Lead inspector:

Hannah Stoten, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Jo Nutbeam, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

120

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

112

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.27%

Close to 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

4.17%

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

18.33%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	65%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	73%	Below

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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average
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	40%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	63%	Below
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	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	59%	Close to average
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	33%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	61%	Close to average
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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
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	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
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	53%	78%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	33%	80%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
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)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	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 (2 term)	13.5%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	15.3%	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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