

R J Mitchell Primary School

Address: Tangmere Crescent, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5PP

Unique reference number (URN): 131590

Inspection report: 24 March 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

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Inclusion is a real strength of the school's provision. It is deeply embedded in its ethos and practice. Leaders and staff are ambitious for disadvantaged pupils and what they can achieve. Effective use of pupil premium funding supports pupils' learning and their wider experiences in the school, for example through equipping staff with the expertise needed to support pupils' emotional regulation and enabling pupils to attend after-school clubs.

Leaders and staff demonstrate a highly sophisticated understanding of pupils' needs and any barriers to learning. Staff receive support and training, including from external agencies such as the local authority and a nearby special school, to ensure pupils' needs are met. Early identification, precise support and regular review enable the school to quickly respond, adjust if needed and ensure that what is in place is having the intended impact. Pupils are given precise targets and staff carefully track their progress towards achieving these. This enables leaders and staff to skilfully move pupils through different levels of support as needed.

Pupils' barriers to learning are reduced effectively through high-quality support throughout the school's provision. For example, pupils are provided with adapted resources and support from additional adults. Pupils in the 'nurture groups' have regular rest breaks, sensory experiences and personalised timetables. In the resourced provision, pupils work in groups according to their needs. Some pupils work on accessing learning in curriculum subjects while others have a higher level of need and receive a specialised learning plan. Pupils, together with their parents and carers, develop their communication through the use of assisted technology for communication.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders are determined that pupils will succeed, and staff share their high ambitions for all pupils, including those with additional needs. The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious, with the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn in each subject clearly identified. The curriculum is carefully structured so that pupils build their knowledge over time.

Leaders have a clear understanding of how effectively the curriculum is delivered and make changes where needed to further support pupils' learning. There is an emphasis on developing pupils' early skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In most areas, this is generally successful. For example, in reading, pupils read books that are typically well matched to the sounds that they know. This helps them to read with increasing confidence. Pupils who struggle to read are supported to catch up. However, early writing skills, such as pencil grip, letter formation, spelling and punctuation, are not as secure. This hinders pupils' writing accuracy and fluency.

Teachers typically present learning clearly. Appropriate training ensures that staff have secure subject knowledge. Teachers check pupils' knowledge and correct any mistakes or misconceptions effectively. However, at times, teaching does not build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding as effectively as it could. When this happens, pupils struggle to tackle more complex aspects of the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that effective support is offered so that pupils are well supported to access the curriculum and learning. This includes providing different kinds of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as the use of additional adults and adapted resources.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is thoughtfully designed and clearly sequenced. It supports children's progress across all areas of learning, with communication and language at its core. Staff focus on developing children's language by modelling and extending what the children say. The curriculum is centred around high-quality texts, and children explore these through meaningful activities in their learning environment, for example creating their own paintings after listening to a story about art galleries.

Staff get to know the children and their families through home visits, observing them in the setting and checking their understanding. This supports staff to be able to identify any additional needs, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities, quickly. Staff ensure any identified needs are met, for example through accessing support from the school's 'nurture groups' or working in smaller groups.

Children in Reception are typically prepared for moving into Year 1. Children's learning experiences are carefully mapped out to support their future learning. For example, children in the Reception Year learn about seeds and how you care for them to make them grow. This prepares them for learning about different plants and the parts of a plant in Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Following a period of change, leaders have a clear and purposeful focus and direction. They have created an environment in which pupils can focus on their learning and staff can develop professionally. Pupils, staff and parents and carers recognise and value the culture and ethos leaders have established.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. Leaders demonstrate a robust understanding of the school's strengths and are continuing to address areas they have accurately identified to improve.

Staff are positive about the changes that leaders are making to the school. They appreciate how well leaders support them in relation to their workload and wellbeing, as well as their professional development.

The governing body knows the school well. It values the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, where every child is treated as an individual and made to feel that they belong. Governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require

further work. They challenge leaders effectively about the progress of school improvement priorities.

Most parents are very happy with the school, including the more recent changes that leaders have introduced. They particularly praise the approachable staff and the support for pupils with additional needs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a well-thought-out programme for pupils' personal development that enhances their learning and broadens their experiences. There is an appropriate relationships curriculum, which is shared with families and teaches pupils about important topics such as consent, health and wellbeing. They learn about different family structures and major world religions.

Pupils talk with confidence about the school's values and how these help them to develop their character and learning. Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong and consider the effect of their behaviour on others. They demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of the fundamental British values and healthy relationships. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to maintain both their physical and mental health. Pupils develop their leadership skills through helping out in the school or the local community. For example, they can become a 'peer mentor' and help solve minor issues at playtime, support the local community food bank or join the school council to represent the pupil voice.

Pupils enjoy the range of experiences offered by the school that enrich their learning, such as after-school clubs for Spanish and football and visits from the emergency services. The school ensures all pupils benefit from and are able to access this offer, for example by providing additional support or adaptations where needed so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to attend. Pupils' academic learning is brought to life through visits to museums and galleries, as well as exploring local places of interest such as a farm, Chalkwell Beach and Hornchurch Country Park. Older pupils benefit from a work experience day at a bank, giving them early insight into financial management.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils typically develop secure skills and knowledge in reading and mathematics, which they need to access their future learning as they progress through the school. However, this is not the case for pupils' early writing skills, where pupils are not developing the necessary fluency and accuracy needed to support their learning.

Published data demonstrates that there is a sizeable group of pupils that do not reach age-appropriate expectations in national tests. This data is impacted by a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are working at levels below the national curriculum within their age group. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment and outcomes,

including for disadvantaged pupils, show that not enough pupils are ready for their next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders place high importance on pupils' attendance and punctuality. However, pupils' attendance remains below average, over time, and far too many pupils are persistently absent from school. The most recent year does show an improvement in attendance for some groups of pupils, but this is not consistent or in line with national levels. Leaders ensure that the importance of attendance is regularly promoted from the time pupils start at the school. The school works closely with families to share its aims and expectations for pupils being in school and provides support to overcome any barriers.

Pupils' behaviour across the school demonstrates respect for each other and for staff. Pupils understand the school's 'golden rules' and staff apply behaviour expectations consistently and fairly. Pupils are polite and respectful when spoken to. They move around the school sensibly and play together collaboratively in the playground. In lessons, pupils are typically attentive to learning. Learning is seldom lost due to any low-level disruptive behaviour. Pupils collaborate sensibly in tasks, such as discussing how to solve mathematical problems using line graphs. Pupils are positive about behaviour in the school; they say bullying rarely happens and they trust staff to deal with any issues.

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

Pupils enjoy their learning and are happy to attend this friendly and inclusive school. Pupils are kept safe and can name a trusted adult they would speak to if they have any concerns or worries. They understand what the school teaches them about risks, such as how to stay safe online.

Pupils have a clear understanding about the importance of inclusion at their school, and everyone is valued. Pupils with additional needs benefit from the multiple ways in which the school offers support to ensure their needs are met. For example, the 'poppy room' helps pupils settle in the mornings and small-group sessions for targeted areas of the curriculum support their learning, such as in phonics. This comprehensive offer extends to the school's dedicated resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND have their needs met well; they settle quickly and develop a secure sense of belonging.

Pupils' learning is supported by the well-considered curriculum in place. Pupils' understanding and confidence across subjects are improving. However, this is not reflected in pupils' attainment in published outcomes, where pupils achieve below-average levels in reading, writing and mathematics compared to their peers nationally. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they need to be.

Behaviour across the school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils are made aware of differences between people and show tolerance and understanding. When things go wrong, there is an emphasis on pupils considering the impact of their behaviour on others. They are

encouraged to think about what they would do differently in the future. Effective adaptations are made for pupils with additional needs.

Pupils value the opportunities to develop their wider interests. They enjoy a range of different clubs on offer, including cooking, athletics and dance. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by visitors such as the police and the local mayor, when they learn about how rules and regulations are used in wider society.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils' skills in early writing, including pencil grip, letter formation, spelling and punctuation, are consistently and securely developed so that pupils develop their writing fluency across the curriculum and achieve stronger outcomes.
 - Leaders should ensure teaching builds more consistently on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding so that pupils are equipped to tackle more complex aspects of the curriculum and be better placed to achieve stronger outcomes.
 - Leaders should continue their work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence across the school, for all groups including children in the early years.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lorraine Earl.

The school is part of a federation called The Aspire Learning Federation.

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 the executive headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. They also held meetings with the members of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The school includes provision for 14 pupils whose needs are related to autism spectrum disorder.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Head of School: Catherine Deighan

Lead inspector:

Eleanor Ross, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joanna Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Sara Morgan, 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 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

301

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

291

Close to 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)

28.13%

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

27.91%

Well 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

13.29%

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

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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	47%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	49%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	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	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	51%	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	54%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	55%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	71%	Below

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	57%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	22%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	25%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	11%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	37%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	42%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	47%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	26%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	33%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	21%	58%	Below

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	37%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	42%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	21%	59%	Below

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	22%	68%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	25%	69%	-44 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	11%	66%	-56 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	37%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	80%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	26%	78%	-52 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	33%	78%	-45 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	78%	-44 pp
2022/23 (final)	21%	77%	-56 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	37%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	79%	-26 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	21%	79%	-58 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 (2 term)	7.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	5.9%	Above

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)	24.5%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	23.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.4%	16.2%	Above

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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