

The Basildon Lower Academy

Address: Timberlog Close, Timberlog Lane, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1UX

Unique reference number (URN): 135895

Inspection report: 27 January 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.

This school requires significant improvement

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **significant improvement** because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils generally achieve well and in line with leaders' expectations. They build knowledge securely as they progress through the curriculum and apply it with increasing confidence. In many subjects, pupils recall previous learning confidently and make meaningful connections to new content.

Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge caused by low attendance. Leaders are developing systems to track progress more precisely so that pupils can recover missed learning more effectively.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically achieve in line with their peers. Targeted interventions, especially in reading, support pupils to access the full curriculum. However, variability in pupils' literacy skills, including handwriting, sometimes affects the quality of written work for a minority.

Pupils are increasingly prepared for the next stages of their education, training or employment, although inconsistent attendance restricts this readiness for some pupils.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and coherently sequenced. It supports pupils to build knowledge in a logical way. Leaders understand its strengths and areas that require further development. Their decisions ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can access the full curriculum.

Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge. They use agreed lesson structures and resources effectively to help pupils understand what to expect in lessons. Teachers revisit prior learning often so that pupils can recall important knowledge and build on it purposefully.

Classrooms are calm and pupils focus well. They produce work that reflects leaders' expectations. Reading is prioritised from the earliest stages. Pupils who fall behind receive targeted support, ensuring that they secure the essential knowledge they need to learn successfully across subjects.

Teachers use assessment accurately. They routinely check pupils' understanding and ensure that pupils knowledge is secure before introducing more complex work. This helps

pupils develop confidence and apply their knowledge to increasingly demanding tasks. Staff are increasingly skilled in adapting teaching to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, though this is not consistently strong across all subjects.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately and promptly. Assessment systems allow staff to understand pupils' starting points and to track their progress carefully. The inclusion team coordinates support effectively so that pupils receive timely help that matches their needs.

Pupils with SEND generally access the full curriculum. Teachers understand how to support these pupils. They benefit from specialist training that helps them reduce barriers to pupils' learning. As a result, most pupils with SEND achieve well and feel valued as members of the school community. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals to secure appropriate support for pupils with more complex needs.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to children's social care are supported thoughtfully. Leaders use pupil premium funding to provide targeted help so that these pupils can benefit from the school's full offer.

Leaders monitor provision for vulnerable pupils closely. Although some variation in support remains as staff refine their practice, pupils strengthen their knowledge and skills over time, including in reading. Leaders maintain close oversight of pupils attending alternative provision to ensure that support remains appropriate.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a well-planned personal development and wellbeing programme that supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to reflect on their beliefs and experiences, understand the difference between right and wrong, and engage respectfully with diverse viewpoints. The school promotes cooperation, participation and understanding of fundamental British values through activities, such as 'Parliamentary Week', cultural celebrations and whole-school assemblies.

Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities that extend their learning beyond the academic curriculum. Creative, artistic, sporting and academic enrichment activities help pupils develop their interests and talents. Pastoral systems ensure that pupils know who to approach when they need help, and staff provide effective support.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive tailored help that allows them to participate fully in the personal development programme. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and offline, for example, through assemblies and visiting speakers. They understand how to form and maintain healthy relationships. Events such as 'hate-crime-awareness week' and 'anti-bullying week' help pupils appreciate the importance of tolerance and respect.

Leadership roles, including the 'pupil panel' and 'respect ambassadors', support pupils to develop confidence and contribute to school life. Rotating membership ensures that many

pupils can participate.

Careers education is well considered. Encounters with employers and organisations, such as the Royal Navy, the National Health Service and the Department for Work and Pensions, help pupils understand different career pathways. Strong transition support helps pupils prepare for their next steps. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation.

Needs attention ●

Leadership and governance

Needs attention ●

Leaders have improved areas such as the structure of the curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and teaching. They recognise that some elements of the curriculum still require further development. However, persistent low attendance remains a significant weakness. Leaders' actions to improve attendance have not secured the necessary impact, and too many pupils do not attend regularly.

Leadership and governance are based on clear values and a strong moral purpose. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities, which informs their decision-making. Their work to improve inclusive practice is evident in the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.

Those responsible for governance are knowledgeable and provide effective challenge and support. They maintain strong oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Leaders and governors are ambitious for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, but low attendance continues to limit these pupils' progress.

Staff training is tailored to professional experience and the school's priorities. Well-structured programmes help staff to build confidence. Less-experienced staff speak positively about leaders' support. Leaders monitor staff workload and wellbeing carefully and respond when concerns arise.

Although significant improvements have been made, the ongoing issues with attendance mean that leadership and governance require further attention to secure the improvements expected.

Urgent improvement ●

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement ●

Improving attendance is an urgent priority. However, leaders' work to address low attendance has not had sufficient impact. Overall attendance remains too low and persistent absence is high. Leaders have acted on external advice, but the strategies that they have implemented have not secured the sustained improvements needed. Too many pupils miss

significant amounts of school and do not benefit fully from the curriculum or enrichment offer.

Behaviour across the school is usually calm and respectful. Leaders have strengthened behaviour expectations and established more consistent routines. Most pupils behave well in lessons and low-level disruption is uncommon. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that staff address concerns promptly and appropriately.

Leaders respond firmly to any discriminatory or harmful behaviour, which helps maintain a safe and supportive culture for pupils and staff. Staff apply behaviour policies with increasing consistency, although some variability remains. Incidents are not always challenged quickly enough, and some routines are not embedded fully across all areas of the school. Despite this, pupils' attitudes to learning remain generally positive and relationships between staff and pupils are constructive.

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

Pupils at Basildon Lower Academy experience a welcoming and inclusive environment. Classrooms are calm and orderly, with routines that support learning. Pupils behave respectfully and understand the school's expectations. However, attendance is too low for too many pupils, and persistent absence limits their learning and social development.

Staff know pupils well and identify their needs quickly. This support helps pupils develop confidence and contributes to the school's friendly atmosphere. Pupils feel safe, trust staff, and know who to speak to if they have concerns. They report that bullying is rare and dealt with promptly and fairly.

The curriculum is structured so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time. Teachers revisit key ideas so that pupils remember important concepts. Reading is prioritised. Pupils who require additional help receive targeted support so that they can strengthen essential skills. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access the full curriculum and make positive progress. Adaptations usually allow pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils in the enhanced provision feel included in the wider school community. Those who attend the 'bridge' provision benefit from support that helps them settle into the school day.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and offline. 'Respect ambassadors' promote positive attitudes and behaviours. A broad range of trips, clubs, cultural events and creative projects enriches pupils' experiences. Pupils value employer encounters and transition events that help them prepare for their next steps in education and training.

Despite these strengths, the low attendance of too many pupils reduces the extent to which they benefit fully from the curriculum and wider school experiences.

Next steps

- Leaders must ensure that their strategies to improve attendance result in a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are absent and persistently absent from school.
 - Leaders should ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to adapt the curriculum effectively, so that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, have every opportunity to learn and understand what they are taught.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff apply routines consistently, so that incidents of poor behaviour are addressed promptly and effectively across the school.
 - Leaders should ensure that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are encouraged to participate fully in the school's wide range of extra-curricular activities.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Basildon 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, Gary Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Deirdre O'Donoghue.

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 members of the leadership team, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 1 unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rebecca Rees

Lead inspector:

Louise Cooper, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rowena Simmons, Ofsted Inspector

James Shapland, Ofsted Inspector

Steven Hogan, Ofsted Inspector

Susan Sutton, 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 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

909

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,350

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

52.37%

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: 28.9%

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

1.54%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.94%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

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).

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)	15.0%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	17.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.4%	9.0%	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)	40.5%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	48.0%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	34.5%	26.5%	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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