

Maiden Beech Academy

Address: Lyme Road, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 8HG

Unique reference number (URN): 137118

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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have secured positive pupil attendance with tenacity. Through meticulous analysis, they have increased pupils' attendance from below national averages to above, including for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work proactively with parents and carers to identify the causes for any absence. They work with parents to provide solutions, such as before- and after-school care, to enable pupils to attend well.

Pupils typically behave well across the school. They are eager to learn new knowledge. Pupils benefit from a calm learning environment, centred on mutual respect. This is because staff know and understand the school's behaviour approach. Staff apply this fairly across the school. Pupils understand that discrimination is wrong. Pupils report that unkindness is rare. However, if issues do arise, they are confident they would be dealt with swiftly.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years is a priority for Maiden Beech. Leaders have designed a well-organised curriculum that takes into account the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage. There is a clear vision, centred on care and education, as well as on high-quality play. Leaders have ambitious expectations of what children can achieve. They accurately evaluate the impact of the education they are providing to children and identify useful future priorities.

In the provision, misconceptions are identified and addressed. Reading is a priority, and children learn to start to read and write. When children write during focused time, they do so with accuracy. However, at times, staff do not identify and correct misconceptions in pupils' writing. Typically, staff interact well with children, promoting discussion using explicit words and phrases to develop children's communication and language. However, this needs some development for staff to ensure interactions consistently enhance children's use of key words and phrases.

Generally, children are ready for Year 1. They are prepared well in each area of learning and are given the tools to be ready to learn the national curriculum. The school works effectively with parents and carers. For example, visits to the school, information evenings and comprehensive booklets inform parents about school life. Consequently, parents are complimentary of the support given to their children to settle well into school.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school accurately identifies pupils' needs. Leaders ensure targeted strategies are put in place to reduce barriers to pupils' learning effectively, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school makes appropriate adaptations for pupils who need them. For example, they use tailored teaching approaches and interventions to teach pupils the knowledge they need to learn. This specific knowledge is identified through assessments.

Leaders regularly review pupils' progress to check the impact of their strategies on individual pupils.

Staff have been trained to follow a clear, step-by-step approach to identify and support pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' targets are specific and measurable. This means leaders can check precisely on how well pupils are progressing in their areas of need. They also make changes if pupils are not receiving the support they need to be successful.

Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies, including the local authority, and families to help pupils achieve well. In addition, the trust provides comprehensive support to assist with identification and assessment of need. The school carefully tracks the use and impact of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have acted with rigour since the school changed from a middle school to a primary school. They have acted quickly and decisively to address the areas that need improvement. For example, they have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils at Maiden Beech. Leaders have strengthened staff knowledge about how to teach pupils to read. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas they need to work on. They have effective strategies in place to be able to bring about change rapidly, and the impact of this can be seen. However, there are still some inconsistencies that leaders are addressing.

Those responsible for governance provide useful support and challenge to the school. This results in the school making sensible improvements to the education pupils receive. Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties diligently, such as for safeguarding. They ensure resources are managed well, particularly during times of change. Staff, including those new to the school or new to the age range they teach, speak highly of the support they receive to teach the curriculum. They are particularly positive about the guidance provided by the new leadership team and feel supported with their workload and wellbeing.

Leaders and those responsible for governance keep pupils front and centre of every decision. They pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable pupils. They have prioritised effective staff training so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme that supports their development beyond the academic. This includes developing their understanding of relationships and health education. Pupils learn important knowledge about risks, including when online. They know not to communicate with people they do not know, and to check with an adult before purchasing anything. Pupils have a firm understanding of relationships and how these can take many forms. They understand how to keep a healthy body and mind. For example, they talk about limiting screen time and reading books as being helpful for mental health and wellbeing.

Pupils understand how the school's behaviour approach helps them to differentiate between right and wrong. They develop their social skills and participate in school life, demonstrating respect and community spirit. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as house captains, and organise equipment for other pupils to play with at social times. They act as role models for younger pupils.

Leaders have created a rich variety of experiences for pupils to enjoy. For example, they take part in visits to the theatre to learn about the arts, and to the local museum to explore maps of the local area through history. Pupils love taking part in clubs such as gym, netball and running. Leaders ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate fully so they can develop their talents and interests.

Pupils have a growing understanding of fundamental British values. They understand why voting is important. They feel it is important to have a say. Pupils develop their understanding of democracy. They appreciate the opportunity to vote for which class book to read, or who will represent the school at a performance. Pupils respect all forms of diversity. They are clear that difference is something to be celebrated and understand that some people may need more help than others to protect them from discrimination.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

A significant minority of pupils are missing key knowledge in reading and writing. These gaps make it harder for them to achieve as well as they could. This includes phonics, where results sit below the national average over time. Pupils' attainment, including for those who are disadvantaged, is not where it needs to be.

Across subjects, staff do not regularly assess what pupils know and can do to inform future teaching. This means that while pupils remember some knowledge of the wider curriculum, this knowledge lacks depth or can be disjointed. The quality of pupils' written work, including their handwriting, varies too much. Conversely, in science, pupils build on their prior knowledge effectively. For example, they are able to classify animals and describe how they are adapted to their environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

In some subjects, such as phonics, some staff lack the subject knowledge to be able to identify and address misconceptions. This means pupils make repeated errors in their learning. At times, pupils' writing is underdeveloped and they do not form letters correctly. This means they are not able to write fluently. Furthermore, in some cases, staff do not teach the meaning of words and phrases well enough. This means pupils are not able to talk confidently about their learning. Leaders have begun to tackle these weaknesses in curriculum and teaching. However, it is early days and so too soon to see the impact of this work.

Since opening as a primary school, the school has designed a broad and well-sequenced curriculum that spans across the school's age range. Leaders have considered the most important knowledge pupils need to learn at each stage. As a result, pupils are ready for their next stage. Leaders acknowledge that while the curriculum is well planned and sequenced, there is more to do to ensure it is taught as leaders intend. This is also the case for the teaching of basic knowledge, including early reading and writing. Although this is so, staff know pupils' needs well and adapt teaching accordingly. For example, they make effective adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning. This is reflected in their regular attendance. The school's values of curious, kind and confident form the bedrock of Maiden Beech. Pupils exemplify these values in all that they do. For example, they talk about being curious when learning about the Mariana Trench and about other parts of the world.

New leaders have acted quickly to identify that improvement is needed in some areas of the school. While the curriculum is designed well, it is not consistently taught as intended. This means pupils' knowledge of reading and writing does not reflect the full extent of the curriculum. There are times when assessment is not used well enough. Furthermore, pupils struggle to articulate their understanding because work to improve their word knowledge is in its infancy. Too many pupils do not reach the level expected in phonics by the end of Year 1. This means these pupils are not well prepared for their next stage. Leaders have introduced and prioritised changes that are starting to have a fruitful impact. The school reduces pupils' barriers to learning through its effective approach to inclusion, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils feel happy and safe. They know caring adults around the school will help them if they have any worries. Pupils rise to staff's high expectations of behaviour. This starts in early years where the youngest children settle well, enabling them to be prepared for their educational journey. If bullying occurs, it is dealt with swiftly. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. For example, they participate in exciting experiences. Professionals such as nurses, artists and firefighters are invited into school to talk about their careers. This enables pupils to think about how they can contribute to society.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff are trained effectively to check how well pupils have learned new knowledge and identify and address any misconceptions, including during phonics lessons.
- Leaders should ensure that staff are trained effectively to teach the vocabulary that pupils need to know, so that they can talk readily and accurately about their learning.
- Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise to teach pupils how to form letters accurately and improve their writing, so that the quality of work in books improves and pupils learn to write fluently.

- Leaders should ensure that staff receive effective training to teach the curriculum as intended, and check the impact of this work.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Berry.

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, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO.

Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil or staff surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school was a middle school at its previous inspection. In September 2022, the school opened as a primary school with its first reception cohort. It currently has pupils from reception to Year 3 and is growing by one year group per year.

The executive headteacher is new to the role since the last inspection.

There is a before- and after-school club run by the school on site.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Mrs Claire Luce

Lead inspector:

Lakmini Harkus, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Jyotsna Paranjape, 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

85

Well 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

420

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)

20.00%

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

3.53%

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

8.24%

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

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		61%	
2024/25		62%	
2023/24		61%	
2022/23 (final)	44%	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		74%	
2024/25		75%	
2023/24		74%	
2022/23 (final)	56%	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		72%	
2024/25		72%	
2023/24		72%	
2022/23 (final)	68%	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		73%	
2024/25		74%	
2023/24		73%	
2022/23 (final)	64%	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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24		46%	
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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25		63%	
2023/24		62%	
2022/23 (final)	33%	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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
2023/24		58%	
2022/23 (final)	37%	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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24		59%	
2022/23 (final)	29%	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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24		67%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24		80%	
2022/23 (final)	33%	78%	-45 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		78%	
2024/25		78%	
2023/24		78%	
2022/23 (final)	37%	77%	-41 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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24		79%	
2022/23 (final)	29%	79%	-51 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)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.7%	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)	9.4%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	36.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	19.8%	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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