

Orchard Mead Academy

Address: Keyham Lane West, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE5 1RT

Unique reference number (URN): 144629

Inspection report: 2 June 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 

Leaders have established a cohesive and ambitious approach to inclusion that ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and addressed effectively. Systems for assessing need are detailed and well embedded. Leaders use a graduated approach, supported by thorough provision mapping and regular multi-disciplinary meetings, to refine support and remove barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged benefit from tailored interventions and appropriate teaching adaptations.

The school's use of additional funding is aligned with whole-school priorities, particularly attendance, literacy and engagement. It is informed by evidence and supported through targeted interventions, pastoral support and enrichment opportunities. As a result of this work, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continue to improve.

Provision for pupils with high levels of need, including those with education, health and care plans, is particularly effective. Leaders ensure that alternative provision is commissioned carefully, monitored closely and used in pupils' best interests. As a result of its use, there is clear evidence of improved attendance and engagement for many individuals.

The school works well with parents and carers, external agencies and community partners to support vulnerable pupils. This collaborative approach strengthens provision and contributes to pupils feeling safe and supported. Leaders have created a positive culture of belonging and continue to ensure that improvements in attendance and outcomes are sustained for all groups.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have made attendance a clear priority. They have developed a structured and increasingly effective strategy. This includes a tiered approach, regular monitoring meetings and targeted support for pupils facing barriers to attendance. Attendance has improved over time, including for key groups such as disadvantaged pupils and those with education, health and care plans. Early intervention, home visits and close work with families contribute positively to this improvement. However, overall attendance remains below national averages and persistent absence is still too high. While improvements are evident, they are not yet secure. Leaders' strategies are increasingly effective and prioritise the link between high attendance and improved outcomes for all pupils.

The school is calm and orderly, supported by clear routines and consistent expectations. Pupils understand the behaviour system and generally respond positively. Relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual care and respect, contributing to a safe and respectful environment. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically positive, and incidents of bullying are managed effectively through clear systems. Suspensions and

exclusions have reduced over time due to targeted and supportive interventions. However, pupils' attitudes to learning vary. In some lessons, engagement is passive and independence is limited. While behaviour systems are well established, there are some inconsistencies in how well staff promote pupils' active participation in learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a broad and coherent curriculum that reflects national requirements and is thoughtfully adapted to the school's context. Curriculum plans are clearly sequenced, and recent improvements, including strengthened subject leadership, demonstrate responsive and purposeful action.

Teaching is structured and consistent, underpinned by shared approaches, such as retrieval practice, modelling and questioning. Across subjects, teachers establish clear routines that support calm classrooms. Appropriate strategies are used to promote participation and check understanding. Where these are applied effectively, teachers resolve misconceptions promptly and support pupils to develop clear and accurate responses. However, in some lessons, checking for understanding is not sufficiently precise, so teachers do not always identify or address misconceptions in a timely way. In a minority of lessons, pupils complete tasks that are overly supported. This limits opportunities for independent thinking and deeper learning.

Teaching generally enables pupils, including those with additional needs, to access the curriculum through appropriate support and adaptation. However, expectations for pupils' work, the quality of responses and levels of participation vary across classes and subjects. This results in uneven learning, with some pupils not building securely on prior knowledge.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of these inconsistencies. However, their actions have not yet secured sufficiently consistent practice to ensure that all pupils benefit from equally effective teaching across the school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clear and purposeful vision that reflects the school's complex context. There is a strong ambition that the school serves as a central, stabilising presence within its community. Leaders are determined that all pupils, regardless of background, vulnerability or starting point, access a high-quality education that enables them to succeed and become active members of society. This vision is evident in leaders' prioritisation of inclusion, attendance and behaviour, particularly in a school serving a highly diverse and often transient community.

Leaders have strengthened pastoral systems significantly. This work helps to reduce barriers to attendance and engagement. The use of data to identify need is well established and increasingly effective in shaping interventions. Whole-school systems, such as the 'FAST' framework, promote consistency and shared expectations, and support a calm and inclusive culture.

Professional development is a key strength. Staff often engage with training that reflects leaders' commitment to developing expertise in response to pupils' needs. Staff report

feeling supported and value the collaborative culture.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that statutory requirements are met and have addressed areas of weakness, including strengthening subject provision such as computing. Their evaluation of provision is developing, and priorities are correctly identified. While their actions are beginning to secure improvement, greater consistency and pace are still emerging, particularly in teaching and achievement. As a result, some variability remains.

Governance is supportive and ensures that statutory responsibilities are met. Leaders engage positively with parents and carers and external partners to strengthen provision. Overall, leadership is committed and increasingly effective, however, more consistency is needed to secure strong outcomes for all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a broad programme of personal development through the 'growth' curriculum, tutor time, assemblies and a range of wider opportunities. Pupils learn about important issues, such as mental health, relationships, online safety and risks, including exploitation and substance misuse. As a result, pupils feel safe and report that they know who to speak to if they are worried.

Pupils develop an understanding of respect, diversity and tolerance within a highly diverse school community. Incidents of discriminatory language, including racist and homophobic language, are recorded and dealt with promptly, reinforcing clear expectations. While pupils are aware of these themes, their understanding of fundamental British values and religious education is not consistently secure, and some struggle to explain their importance.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, music and initiatives, such as the 'Green House Project'. Pupils enjoy these and say they support their confidence and wellbeing. Participation is increasing, although not all pupils engage regularly. Opportunities for pupil leadership, including prefect roles and the 'student parliament', promote involvement in school life. Leaders are determined to widen the breadth and impact of these opportunities.

Careers education is a valued aspect of the school. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive with options processes and benefit from experiences, such as visits and input from external experts. Provision is well considered and effective in supporting pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Pastoral support is a strength. Leaders have prioritised a trauma-informed approach and strengthened pastoral capacity. Staff know pupils well and provide targeted support, including mentoring, counselling and intervention programmes. This contributes to pupils feeling supported and included, particularly those with additional needs.

Overall, the personal development programme supports pupils' wellbeing effectively. Leaders are now focused on strengthening the consistency and impact of learning in areas,

such as values, religion and careers, so that all pupils are prepared equally well for life beyond school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Recent examination results show that pupils' outcomes are improving. There have been gains in key areas, particularly in English, and more pupils are achieving qualifications that support their next steps in education or training. Leaders' focus on raising attainment is beginning to have a positive impact, and there are early signs that differences between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing.

Inspection evidence shows that many pupils are learning appropriately. They can recall recent knowledge and, in some cases, produce detailed and accurate work that demonstrates secure understanding. This reflects improving consistency in teaching and support. However, these improvements are not yet consistent. Overall results, including in English and mathematics, remain below national averages. This means that some pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are still uneven.

The quality and completeness of pupils' work vary. While some produce work of a good quality, others have gaps or incomplete tasks, limiting their progress over time. Leaders' actions are appropriate, but not yet embedded fully, so a significant minority of pupils still underachieve.

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

Pupils experience the school as a highly inclusive and supportive community, where they feel safe, valued and well cared for. They describe strong, trusting relationships with staff and say there are adults they can talk to if they have concerns. High levels of staff presence at the start of the day and during social times help create a calm and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel secure.

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging within a diverse community. They value the way that different cultures, backgrounds and identities are respected, and say that the school promotes kindness and tolerance. Pupils report that bullying and inappropriate language are taken seriously and dealt with quickly, helping them to feel confident that issues will be resolved.

Pupils generally behave well and understand the school's expectations. They are familiar with the shared 'FAST' approach and say that it is applied consistently. Pupils view behaviour systems as fair and supportive, recognising that staff help them to reflect on and improve their behaviour. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and contribute to a respectful environment.

In lessons, pupils benefit from clear routines and structured teaching. Many respond confidently to questioning and take part in activities that support their learning. However, in some lessons, pupils rely on direct prompting and do not consistently demonstrate independence. Some pupils have gaps in their work, often linked to absence, which limits how secure their learning is over time.

Pupils enjoy a range of wider opportunities, including clubs, sporting activities and enrichment experiences, that contribute to their confidence and personal development. Attendance is improving due to the support and encouragement provided by staff, although some pupils do not attend consistently. Overall, pupils belong and thrive in this caring and inclusive school, that is committed to supporting them to 'be the best version of themselves'.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, so that all pupils develop a secure understanding of important knowledge and become increasingly independent in their learning.
 - Leaders should accelerate improvements in pupils' achievement by ensuring that gaps in pupils' learning are resolved quickly and consistently, so that pupils' achievements are in line with national averages.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen their work to improve attendance, particularly persistent absence, so that overall attendance rises more rapidly to be in line with national figures and improvements are sustained across all groups.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of the personal development curriculum, particularly in relation to religious education and fundamental British values, so that they can confidently recall, explain and apply their learning about different faiths, cultures and wider societal issues.
 - Leaders should further strengthen their evaluation and quality assurance processes so that they identify key priorities sharply, evaluate the impact of actions rigorously and ensure that improvements in teaching, achievement and attendance are implemented consistently and at pace across the school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Mead Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Ridley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Glover.

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 pupils, parents and carers, school staff, senior leaders, executive leaders, trustees and academy council members 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.

The school includes provision for 7 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities within a specially resourced provision.

The school currently makes use of 13 unregistered alternative provisions.

Principal: Subrina Johal

Lead inspector:

Nyree Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Javier Sanchez-Garcia, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Harrison, Ofsted Inspector

Damian Painton, Ofsted Inspector

Emma Mason, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,045

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

1,200

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

39.62%

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

3.35%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.45%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	35.3%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.1%	45.3%	Below

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	38.9	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	37.0	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.6	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.69	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.61	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	23.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	22.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	33.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.2	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.08	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	23.8%	53.1%	-29.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	22.2%	52.4%	-30.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	33.5	50.4	-16.9
2023/24 (final)	31.7	50.0	-18.4
2022/23 (final)	30.2	50.3	-20.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.08	0.16	-1.24
2022/23 (final)	-0.75	0.17	-0.91

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	85%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	83%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	87%	94%	Below

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 (3 term)	11.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.2%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.3%	9.0%	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 (3 term)	34.0%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.1%	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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