

Laburnum Primary School

Address: Laburnum Road, SG19 1HQ

Unique reference number (URN): 150629

Inspection report: 18 November 2025

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 generally achieve well across the school. For example, children in the early years make a secure start to their phonics learning. Most pupils learn to read words quickly and with accuracy. This is shown in the high proportion of pupils who pass the Year 1 phonics screening check. As pupils move through the year groups, they build on this early success. They make steady gains in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, pupils typically reach the expected standard in national tests ahead of starting secondary school.

In a few subject areas, pupils are still developing their ability to recall and explain their previous learning in depth. They find it difficult to discuss or record their work independently. Leaders recognise this is an area that needs further development, so pupils can achieve even more and be fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have successfully improved attendance since the school joined the multi-academy trust. They have introduced a systematic approach that tracks absence closely and follows up any non-attendance swiftly with families. Staff carry out home visits, send letters and hold conversations that set out clear expectations. These actions ensure that families understand the importance of regular attendance and that there is support available to help them achieve it.

In parallel, pupils behave well at school. Daily teaching of clear rules and routines ensures that pupils learn with minimal disruption. This allows teachers to focus fully on teaching and helps pupils to concentrate on their learning. When issues arise, leaders act quickly and fairly. The rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly. Leaders ensure that all voices are heard. Consequences are made clear to pupils and unkind behaviour is not tolerated. If suspension is used, it is done so appropriately with well-thought-out support available for pupils on their return. This helps pupils to settle back into routines and re-engage positively with school life.

Leaders and staff build respectful, trusting relationships with pupils and families. They show care, act early and set clear expectations for all. This blend of firm systems and thoughtful support is demonstrated in pupils attending well, being safe and feeling valued.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear oversight of the curriculum and how it is taught. The trust has introduced a well-sequenced curriculum that sets out what should be taught and when, so pupils can build knowledge step by step. In mathematics, for example, leaders have streamlined the models used in lessons so that pupils build their understanding of number securely. Pupils typically revisit and build on what they know from the early years onwards. This helps them to grasp new ideas with confidence. Leaders have highlighted the

importance of helping teachers support pupils to share their ideas more clearly and deeply in lessons.

Teaching has been strengthened through the trust's 'playbook'. This guides teachers to use evidence-informed approaches that show pupils how to learn. For instance, a teacher will demonstrate and then explain what pupils will do and why. Pupils then practise alongside the teacher before working on their own. This routine helps pupils to feel confident and be able to work independently. Pupils benefit greatly from these clear and well-established approaches to learning. This approach to teaching has proved most successful in early reading and mathematics but requires further development in some other subjects to support pupils remembering more over time.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years set the foundation for warm, positive relationships with children and their families. Parents and carers value the thoughtful transition arrangements that enable children to settle well into school life. This includes helpful support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum gives children strong foundations in reading, spoken language and number for later learning. For example, number representations used in Year 1 are introduced early. Children begin their reading journey in the Nursery class. Stories and rhymes help them to enjoy sounds and words. In Reception, phonics teaching and books matched to children's known sounds build confidence and fluency. Staff are steadily improving their skills in supporting children's language development. They often repeat what children say using accurate or longer sentences. This helps children to hear new words and practise speaking clearly. The learning environment encourages children to apply their knowledge through play. Activities such as using dough daily strengthen hand muscles. This helps children prepare well for mark making and future writing.

Staff carefully plan and support children's independence to help with the move into Year 1. Despite this, some children struggle with the transition into Year 1 because teaching does not always build sufficiently on what has been learned in early years.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school identifies pupils' individual needs with care and accuracy. For example, staff are adept at finding out about children's needs in the early years and quickly spot those who may need additional help. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to social care receive targeted support. Staff check pupils' learning before and after any support is put in place so that they can measure the effectiveness of this input. Leaders generally check this well, although they know they need to be more consistent in seeing whether support is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The greatest impact for pupils has come from improving the quality of teaching and learning on offer to all. Disruption-free classrooms and increased time for pupils to practise new learning help pupils to focus, build confidence and consolidate their learning.

Staff receive regular training so that they can deliver support to pupils with confidence. Leaders make sure training follows a clear step-by-step approach. This helps staff to respond to pupils' needs in a consistent way. Leaders also work closely with parents and carers, wider professionals and external agencies. This teamwork ensures that pupils' support plans reflect both aspirations and practical needs.

Parents value how inclusive the school is. They see how leaders and staff act quickly, listen carefully and help pupils with their learning, wider personal development and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for the school. They have worked carefully to resolve areas that needed improving. Rather than relying on quick fixes, they have put in place practical systems designed to last. This includes revising the curriculum, amending teaching practices and improving systems for attendance and behaviour. Some changes are still being embedded, but there is a clear logic to what leaders have prioritised and clear impact in what they have already achieved.

The expertise of trustees and local governors is evident in how they celebrate successes, monitor progress and challenge the school effectively. They use resources well to support networking, enabling the school to share good practice with local schools and benefit from local and national expertise. This is reflected in the professional learning programme for teachers. It has inspired staff to develop their subject knowledge and introduce research-backed teaching approaches, which are helping pupils to achieve more. Although much has changed at the school, staff appreciate how these improvements have supported their workload and wellbeing. Better behaviour means teachers can focus more on teaching and applying their training, so pupils gain more from lessons.

The combined efforts of leaders and staff to improve the school have earned the trust and admiration of many parents and carers. This is evident, for example, in the way parents work collaboratively with the school to ensure that pupils attend regularly and benefit fully from the school's growing offer. Parents value the positive changes made since the school joined the trust.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Like the curriculum, the personal development and wellbeing programme is ever-evolving. Pupils benefit greatly from the extra-curricular opportunities currently on offer. For example, they take part in outdoor pursuits, such as boating on residential trips and represent the school in singing concerts and sports tournaments. The school's outdoor swimming pool allows pupils to start swimming lessons in the early years, exceeding the minimum entitlement for primary-aged pupils. Leaders' current focus is on expanding extra-curricular opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Their aim is for every pupil to discover and nurture a talent or interest in art, music and sport.

The personal, social and health education programme teaches pupils about relationships. They learn to recognise and respond to peer pressure, both in person and online. Teachers explain important safety topics carefully, so pupils understand how to speak up if they ever

face difficulties inside or outside of school. Through lessons, pupils learn to understand people and communities. For example, in history, older pupils study the suffragette movement. They learn that ideas about women today are very different from what some people believed in the past. These lessons help pupils to understand concepts such as fairness, equality and respect.

Some pupils need support with social skills, such as taking turns in conversation or keeping a topic going. Leaders recognise a need to arrange more opportunities for pupils to develop these skills, so they can interact with confidence and independence. When pupils face challenges, the school provides effective wellbeing and pastoral support. Activities such as games and role play help pupils to understand their emotions and build self-discipline, empathy and resilience. These approaches sit hand in hand with the school's clear behaviour expectations.

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

Pupils' experiences are shaped by the school's core expectations to challenge, achieve, show respect, give effort and be safe. Pupils get the challenge they need because leaders strengthened the curriculum and teachers typically teach it well. 'Do now' tasks help pupils to reconnect with what they have learned before, preparing them for what comes next. Regular opportunities for pupils to revise the key knowledge, along with clear explanations from teachers, help more pupils to achieve their best. This is reflected in pupils' national test outcomes. Classroom routines are well established. This is especially helpful for pupils with barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The familiar structure makes it easier for them to focus on new ideas and skills.

Pupils enjoy the calm and focused atmosphere in lessons. They notice and appreciate the effort that pupils, staff and leaders have put into creating this atmosphere. Pupils' faces light up when they earn a house point for showing kindness or answering a question correctly in class. Clear behaviour expectations help pupils to understand what it means to 'shine' in lessons. Pupils develop and show respect for others. There are well-thought-out opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship, to attend residential trips and to take part in community events. All of this helps to develop pupils' understanding about the world in which they live.

Pupils are greeted warmly at the gate each day. This helps them to feel welcome and safe. Staff notice and understand them well. The lunchtime club on offer gives those pupils who need it a calm and safe space to relax. These small actions by leaders help everyone to feel cared for. Pupils also know that when they speak to a trusted adult, they will receive the support they and their families need to thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen how teachers help pupils retain detailed knowledge in a few foundation subjects to support future learning.
 - Leaders should expand opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and independence in social interactions, enabling them to converse well in lessons and in wider aspects of school life.
 - Leaders should strengthen the transition between the early years provision and key stage 1 by ensuring that assessment guides the teaching in Year 1 and builds on previously taught knowledge.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Advantage Schools, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stuart Lock, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark McCourt.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors who have previously served as HMIs.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the CEO and other senior leaders in the trust and school. The lead inspector met with two trustees.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Children join the Nursery Year during the term they turn three years old.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Ben Bardell

Lead inspector:

Daniel Short, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

Oriana Dalton, His Majesty's 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 18 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

194

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

240

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)

24.28%

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

3.09%

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

13.40%

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

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 maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24		61%	
2022/23		60%	

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	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24		74%	
2022/23		73%	

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	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24		72%	
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25	81%	74%	Close to average
2023/24		73%	
2022/23		73%	

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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24		46%	
2022/23		44%	

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%	
2024/25	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		62%	
2022/23		60%	

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	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
2022/23		59%	

‘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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
2022/23		66%	

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	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
2022/23		78%	

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	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	
2022/23		79%	

‘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 (1 term)	6.7%	5.1%	Above
2023/24	7.2%	5.5%	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 (1 term)	17.8%	14.3%	Above
2023/24	23.9%	14.6%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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