

Cuxton Community Infant School

Address: Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Kent, ME2 1EY

Unique reference number (URN): 141276

Inspection report: 12 May 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders promote the importance of coming to school each day. Pupils know why it is important to attend. Consequently, pupils' attendance rates are high, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result of leaders' rigorous approach to attendance, persistent absence has reduced sharply. Leaders closely analyse patterns in attendance. They establish positive relationships with families to identify any barriers to regular attendance. Where necessary, leaders provide personalised support, while maintaining high expectations.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' behaviour. Everyone rises to meet these ambitions. This is due to the high expectations being understood. Staff apply the agreed rules consistently and fairly. As a result, pupils follow routines well. Pupils are incredibly kind and polite. They show impressive independence when collecting resources for learning and when choosing activities at social times. Pupils take high levels of pride in their school environment and look after equipment thoughtfully. Their attitudes towards their learning are consistently positive. Older pupils set a positive example for younger pupils. Pupils are engaged in their learning and do not need to be reminded about their conduct. Bullying is rare and discriminatory language is not tolerated. When concerns arise, staff act quickly. Leaders make appropriate adaptations to their approach to behaviour for pupils with SEND so that all pupils can flourish.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established highly effective systems for identifying pupils who may have barriers to their learning or wellbeing when they join the school. They ensure that staff quickly identify the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work closely with external agencies, parents and carers to understand pupils' needs. They put robust support in place. Ongoing professional learning for staff ensures that they have the knowledge and skills needed to make carefully considered adaptations to the curriculum where necessary. Pupils who access wellbeing and academic support in the 'Squirrels' and 'Hazel' rooms benefit from well-trained and caring staff who support them to thrive.

Leaders routinely monitor and review the impact of the support provided to pupils. They refine interventions carefully to swiftly address any gaps that pupils may have in their learning. This supports disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to learn alongside their peers. As a result, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that funding, such as pupil premium, is used precisely to help disadvantaged pupils succeed in all aspects of school life. They support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to participate fully in the extensive programme beyond the academic. Through thoughtful adaptations to trips and activities, the personal development offer is an entitlement for all pupils.

Leaders have developed a thoughtful and well-designed programme to support pupils' personal development. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is highly effective. Pupils develop an impressive awareness of online safety and different relationships. They learn the importance of having a balanced diet and regular exercise. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions through the carefully chosen whole-class reading texts and trips to different places of worship. They develop a detailed understanding of treating others with respect. This is shown in pupils' considerate actions towards their peers. The school's outdoor play provision further develops pupils' teamwork, independence and problem-solving. Pupils play well together, take turns and learn how to manage their differences calmly and sensitively. Pupils gain a clear understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they learn about democracy by taking part in elections for stories and choosing the school's values.

Leaders are committed to providing extensive experiences for pupils beyond the classroom. They have developed the 'Cuxton Agreed Real-life Enrichment' (CARE) package, which provides all pupils with opportunities that complement their learning. There is something for everyone. Carefully planned experiences include local trips, dance sessions, caring for animals, astronaut camp and visiting speakers. Leaders thoughtfully adapt the CARE package so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities participate fully.

Wellbeing support is extensive. Leaders draw on their deep understanding of pupils to provide highly effective support for their social and emotional development. Pupils who may need additional help benefit from support from well-trained, caring staff. Staff use a wide range of well-chosen strategies to help pupils manage their emotions and stay engaged in learning. This reflects the school's commitment to inclusion and pupils' emotional wellbeing. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils develop a broad range of knowledge across the curriculum. For example, they speak with confidence about capital cities and important landmarks in London. Leaders' approach to speaking and listening means that pupils talk with increasing confidence and fluency. Pupils typically produce work of a high standard that they are proud of. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress through the curriculum from their starting points. This is because staff adapt the provision well to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils secure the most important knowledge that they need in reading and writing. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been close to the national average over time. The rigorous focus on handwriting in the early years means that pupils write fluently and consistently well, forming letters accurately. Where checks on learning are less precise,

some misconceptions remain in mathematics. Overall, however, by the time pupils leave the school, they have the key knowledge they need to be ready for key stage 2.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum. Learning is carefully ordered so that pupils build important knowledge over time. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. Their actions have led to improvements, particularly in the teaching of early writing. A whole-school approach to handwriting and letter formation helps pupils to develop their accuracy and fluency as they move through the school. Staff model posture and pencil grip using simple steps. Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to practise letter shapes in their early morning work.

The phonics programme is taught well and pupils practise new sounds often. They grow in confidence and fluency as readers. Staff choose stories that support pupils to develop their understanding of diversity and inclusion. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is thoughtful and well structured. Staff know pupils' needs well and break learning down into manageable steps.

While the teaching of reading and writing is highly effective, the resources used to help pupils understand complex concepts such as fractions in mathematics are not always as effective as they could be. Teachers generally use questioning well to check if pupils have understood important ideas. At times, these checks are not always precise enough. This means that some misconceptions in pupils' learning persist.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years receive a warm, well-organised start to school life. They are happy and well cared for. Staff establish positive relationships with parents and carers. They share guidance and celebrate success. This enables parents to support their child's learning at home.

Leaders have prioritised ensuring that there is a high-quality provision, which starts in the Nursery. The curriculum is well designed and carefully ordered. This helps children to build their skills over time. For example, they use fine motor control when building towers with sticks and cereal. Scissor-cutting and mark-making help children to develop the skills that they need to form letters accurately. Staff identify the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly. These children benefit from well-matched, appropriate support.

Staff develop children's vocabulary through the use of stories and rhymes. Children learn new words and practise speaking in full sentences. Classrooms are rich in language. While interactions between staff and children are often effective, the use of high-quality modelling of vocabulary is variable. Reading is embedded from the start. In Reception, staff teach phonics consistently and effectively. Reading, writing and mathematics are reinforced through indoor and outdoor activities. This means children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas requiring further development. This informed evaluation drives well-prioritised actions, particularly in the teaching of writing and in strengthening the early years provision. This reflects leaders' commitment to making decisions that are in the best interests of pupils. Leaders are resolute in creating an inclusive environment for pupils, ensuring that pupils flourish, including those who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

Governors and trustees are fully committed and dedicated to their roles. They share leaders' high expectations and aspirations for pupils and fulfil their statutory duties with diligence. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the school's context and priorities. Those responsible for governance ensure that resources are directed where they will benefit pupils the most. This includes giving children in the early years the best start to their education and in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

Staff benefit from an effective professional learning programme. Leaders ensure that this builds staff expertise and supports whole-school priorities. They engage purposefully with other schools to learn from their practice. These opportunities for collaboration help staff to feel well supported. Staff undertake a range of national professional qualifications that enhance their development. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their wellbeing and the approach taken to support their workload. Leaders engage positively with parents and carers. They regularly seek the views of parents through the 'parent parliament'. Parents value the regular communication they receive from the school.

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

Pupils arrive smiling and happily walk through the school gate each morning. They are greeted warmly by staff who know them by name. Pupils feel safe and know that staff will help them if there is anything worrying them. They attend regularly. This is because leaders have created a caring environment where staff take the time to get to know their pupils well. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave very well. They understand the rules and display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are proud of their school. They treat the school environment with respect. Pupils know that bullying is not acceptable. Consequently, it rarely happens. Should pupils fall out or share unkind words, staff quickly help them to resolve their differences. Pupils play well together during social times. Older pupils regularly support younger pupils to use the trim trail and climbing frames.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive high-quality support. The curriculum is interesting and pupils are keen to share the new things they have learned. They understand the school's values of community, adventure, resilience and excellence. Pupils know how these values help them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Reading and writing are priorities from the Nursery onwards. Pupils are well prepared for their move to key stage 2.

Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities beyond the classroom. This offer develops pupils' interests through trips to different places of worship and historical sites. Pupils enjoy the range of experiences on offer, such as spring nature walks, picnics in the park and hunting for dinosaurs around the school. These broaden pupils' horizons, help them to build positive relationships with their peers and support pupils' personal growth. Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged participate fully and thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that checks on learning enable teachers to identify and address pupils' misconceptions, so that pupils develop detailed knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
 - Leaders should further strengthen the consistency of high-quality staff interactions with children across the early years, ensuring that all staff model vocabulary that maximises learning.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of the Primary First Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lorna Hamilton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Rumbles.

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 headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with leaders from the trust, trustees and representatives from the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Charlotte Aldham-Breary

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Catherine Hylands, Ofsted Inspector

Tim Muggridge, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

266

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

268

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)

6.21%

Well below 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

1.13%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

4.51%

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

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)

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 (3 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	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)	9.2%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	19.0%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright