

Epping St John's Church of England School

Address: Bury Lane, Epping, Essex, CM16 5JB

Unique reference number (URN): 145050

Inspection report: 10 March 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils steadily accumulate key knowledge in a range of subjects. They secure important foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps pupils' learning of important language in other subjects. Pupils write well. They use their mathematical knowledge to solve a range of problems. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Many succeed as they progress to further learning, training or employment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well through the curriculum from their starting points. In post-16, students develop a rich understanding of complex ideas and theories. They apply their knowledge in different contexts with increasing ease. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. This is reflected by published outcomes, which are close to the national averages. However, pupils who could achieve a greater depth of learning do not achieve as well as they might in some subjects.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have a detailed understanding of the curriculum and how well it is taught. In key stage 3, pupils study a broad range of subjects. As pupils progress to key stage 4 and into key stage 5, they choose from a wide range of appropriate vocational and academic options. Subject specialists have set out the key information and vocabulary pupils need to learn. This has been logically ordered to help pupils build their understanding of important knowledge over time.

Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers explain new ideas clearly. They make suitable adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers check what pupils understand. They address gaps in knowledge and help to fix misconceptions. However, sometimes teaching does not adapt to support pupils who are ready to move on more quickly. This means teaching does not always help pupils access a greater depth of understanding.

Leaders have designed a reading programme that supports pupils to become highly efficient readers. A range of interesting and diverse texts helps pupils learn about cultures and faiths different from their own. Staff provide effective support for those pupils at the earliest stages of reading. This includes pupils whose first language is not English.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately assess pupils' individual needs. Expert staff identify the barriers that could hinder how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn. Staff then develop targeted strategies to help pupils with SEND overcome these barriers. Leaders ensure that teachers have the necessary expertise. This supports staff to translate this information into the classroom. This helps teachers make effective adaptations to their practice. As a result, pupils with SEND progress steadily through the curriculum. Leaders monitor this work routinely. When necessary, leaders make suitable adjustments to pupils' provision. This ensures teaching continues to meet any changing needs.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from the provision offered by the school, for example, through access to a wide range of pastoral and academic support. This helps pupils to achieve well, academically and personally. Disadvantaged pupils also benefit from having post-16 students act as mentors. This helps them navigate the challenges and pressures of preparing for GCSE examinations. However, leaders have only recently begun to address the barriers some disadvantaged pupils face in attending school regularly.

Leaders engage effectively with parents, external agencies and other partners. Where pupils access provision outside of school, it is well considered and effective. It supports pupils to re-engage with learning and achieve ambitious goals.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently operated under difficult circumstances. The school has been divided by some community tensions, which have impacted their context. Leaders have carefully woven pupils' worries, concerns and thoughts into the curriculum. Leaders remain focused on ensuring that pupils thrive. This is at the forefront of everyone's thinking. All decisions are taken in pupils', including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, best interests.

Leaders understand the strengths of the school well. In many areas they have secured improvements. This includes improving teaching, securing better behaviour and supporting many pupils to attend school regularly. Leaders recognise that further work is needed. In particular, to help disadvantaged pupils attend more often. They have plans in place to achieve this but it is too early to see the full impact. Leaders are held to account for their actions by a local governing body and experienced trust board. However, sometimes the focus is on leaders' actions and not the impact on pupils' experiences. This means that sometimes the challenge provided to leaders is not as robust as it could be. Consequently, this can hinder the pace and precision of improvement.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and cared for. Staff accept that working in schools can be workload heavy. But they trust leaders to manage this well. Staff recognise how a well-considered professional development programme continues to improve their teaching. Those teachers at the earliest stages of their careers are well supported. They get off to a flying start.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a well-considered personal, social and health education curriculum. They have thought carefully about the local context. They have adapted the curriculum to help pupils understand issues that may worry or confuse them. Leaders have ensured that teachers have the knowledge and expertise to teach the programme well. This helps teachers support pupils to understand life in modern Britain. Pupils know what it means to be a positive citizen. They value fundamental British values, such as respect and the importance of the rule of law. These values are evident around the school. Not just in many pupils' recall of learning but in pupils' interactions and conduct in their daily lives.

Pupils know about a wide range of cultures and faiths different from their own. They respect

difference. Pupils value each other's individuality and how that makes their own lives richer. Teaching helps pupils develop debating skills. This helps them, including those students in post-16, engage in deep, meaningful discussions. Pupils learn how to respect each other's views, including those they disagree with.

Many pupils take advantage of an extensive range of opportunities. Staff encourage pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to take part. Disadvantaged pupils are increasingly accessing life defining experiences. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award or residential visits that develop resilience and independence. Pupils take on leadership roles. This helps them understand responsibility and democracy. Leaders place high value on pupils' feedback. Leaders act on pupil leaders' concerns and recommendations. This makes the school a better place for all.

Leaders have designed a well-crafted careers programme. This ensures pupils make considered decisions about what to do when they leave the school. As a result, many pupils move on successfully to appropriate education, employment or training.

Leaders have begun to check on the impact of the personal development programme. However, this is at an early stage. Consequently, leaders do not always have a precise understanding of inconsistencies in the teaching of the programme.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious and balanced post-16 curriculum. Students have opportunities to follow academic or vocational programmes. Alongside a structured careers programme, this helps students to be well-prepared and make informed choices about their next steps.

Generally, teaching helps students learn well. Teachers break down complex and often abstract concepts into small, easy to understand pieces. Teachers then support students to layer these small pieces to secure key concepts. In most cases students use this knowledge well. They apply what they know in a range of different situations. Students become effective problem solvers and draw out well-informed conclusions. As a result, students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Many A level students make better progress than their peers nationally. However, as in the rest of the school, in a small number of subjects, teaching does not always help students develop a rich and deep understanding of key ideas. This hinders some students from achieving the highest grades.

Students are role models and take an active part in the school community. Some take on mentoring roles for GCSE pupils. Some help younger pupils with reading. Others run clubs for the rest of the school. Students also take on a role in the wider community. They fundraise for local charities and help organise local events. This work helps to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Needs attention ●

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Leaders have not effectively supported disadvantaged pupils to overcome their barriers to attending school. This means that some disadvantaged pupils are absent from school too often. Leaders have successfully tackled low attendance levels for other pupils. Leaders have looked closely at the reasons for and patterns of pupils' non-attendance. They have developed effective strategies to help them re-engage with school. This includes reassuring some pupils who were worried about coming to school because of local issues, beyond the school's control. Most pupils are attending school more often.

Pupils behave well. They are attentive in lessons. They move around the school with purpose. There are warm, positive relationships between staff and pupils. Learning is rarely disrupted and pupils enjoy learning in productive, calm classrooms. Pupils have developed a positive attitude to learning. The increased focus on rewards has helped secure this keenness for achieving more. Where staff need to intervene they do so, in most cases, consistently well. Leaders have not always communicated their behaviour strategies well. This means that some pupils, and parents, do not always understand the school's approach. Some feel the systems are too harsh. However, pupils recognise the improvements in the school's culture. In general, most feel they are treated fairly.

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

Pupils are proud of their school. They have a deep-rooted sense of respect for each other. This helps to foster positive relationships and trust in each other and with staff. Older pupils take on key responsibilities that help younger pupils feel safe and cared for. Post-16 students guide Year 11 pupils through the challenges of preparing for GCSE examinations. This is a warm, inclusive community. All are welcome. All are valued.

Pupils work hard and produce high-quality work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are expertly supported to overcome their barriers to learning. Pupils facing personal or social challenges are equally well supported. As a result, pupils receive positive outcomes in public examinations.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave well in class and around school. Learning is rarely disrupted. Some feel aspects of the school's behaviour approach are overly harsh. However, pupils agree that they are treated consistently and fairly. Bullying is rare. Any incidents are dealt with quickly. Pupils feel safe. This helps them thrive.

However, some disadvantaged pupils have not been effectively supported to overcome their barriers to attending school. As a result, too many of these pupils are absent from school too often. They miss out on key learning and valuable experiences.

Pupils understand the complexities of life in modern Britain. They have an acute awareness of the tensions within the local area. Pupils are ably supported to become positive, active members of their wider community. They learn and uphold the key values that underpin

British identity. They are tolerant, respectful and place great store in the rule of law. Older pupils, including post-16 students, engage in respectful debates about the issues that are important to them. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extracurricular opportunities. Some play sports, traditional and modern. Others perform in ambitious, dramatic productions. Residential trips and motivational speakers help pupils develop into resilient, confident young adults.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they develop and implement plans that support disadvantaged pupils to overcome their specific barriers to regularly attending school.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise to adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils, and students in post-16, who can achieve a greater depth of learning achieve as well as they could.
 - Leaders should ensure that they carefully monitor the implementation of the personal development programme and act on the feedback to ensure pupils enjoy a consistent learning experience.
 - Leaders should ensure that those responsible for governance have the knowledge and expertise to hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions.
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About this inspection

This school is part of BMAT Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helena Mills (CEO), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Victoria Marrow.

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 and other members of the senior leadership team, representatives of the trust board and local governing committee, trust executives, including the CEO and members of staff 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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 9 November 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within 8 school years.

The school makes use of 10 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Michael Yerosimou

Lead inspector:

Dave Gibson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Philippa Darley, His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Nutman, Ofsted Inspector

Jason Carey, Ofsted Inspector

Damian Loneragan, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,031

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

1,036

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.60%

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: 28.9%

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

2.04%

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

11.74%

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

Well 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).

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 (revised)	42.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.5%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.6%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

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 (revised)	42.8	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.1	46.3	Close to average

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)	0.00	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.37	-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 (revised)	20.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	21.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	21.7%	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 (revised)	30.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	29.0	35.0	Below

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)	-0.73	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.21	-0.57	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' 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 (revised)	20.0%	53.1%	-33.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	21.4%	53.1%	-31.7 pp
2022/23 (final)	21.7%	52.4%	-30.7 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 (revised)	30.2	50.4	-20.2
2023/24 (final)	30.9	50.0	-19.1
2022/23 (final)	29.0	50.3	-21.3

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)	-0.73	0.16	-0.90
2022/23 (final)	-1.21	0.17	-1.38

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 (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.98	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.82	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.90	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.6	0.0	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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)	9.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.9%	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 (2 term)	27.4%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	33.3%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	30.0%	26.5%	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.

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