

King's Oak Primary School

Address: Oak Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK42 0HH

Unique reference number (URN): 109502

Inspection report: 19 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 ●

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed the curriculum with pupils' needs in mind. They have prioritised language and communication, ensuring that key vocabulary is identified for each subject. There is a clear focus on the most important knowledge and skills pupils need in English and mathematics. This enables increasing numbers of pupils to access the rest of the curriculum successfully.

Staff teach the curriculum very effectively. They recap pupils' prior learning to ensure this is secure. They explain new content clearly, modelling key language for pupils to use. If pupils face barriers to learning, staff put effective support in place to overcome these. They check pupils' understanding regularly so that they can adjust their teaching to address any gaps or misconceptions.

Leaders keep themselves very well informed on the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They are quick to act when something needs to improve. For example, if staff need to strengthen their subject knowledge or their expertise in adapting teaching to meet the range of pupils' needs, leaders provide appropriate training or coaching. Leaders' identification of writing as a priority area has led to a renewed teaching approach. This is having a noticeable impact on pupils' outcomes.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders prioritise the early years. They intentionally admit children at a very young age to set them up as well as possible for later learning. They work effectively with parents and carers to promote children's school readiness. Children follow a well-sequenced curriculum from the moment they start. This ensures that they learn what they need to prepare them for each stage of their early education. There is a particular focus on speech, language and communication. These are taught consistently and effectively across the setting.

Nothing is left to chance. Staff design play-based activities that reinforce children's learning from taught sessions. Staff interactions with children are high quality. If children show a lack of enthusiasm about certain activities, staff find ways to spark their interest and get them involved. They model key language and provide repeated opportunities for children to practise this so that it becomes embedded.

Leaders are determined to ensure that children enter Year 1 with firm foundations in early reading, writing and mathematics. They identify any barriers children face as early as possible and put precisely targeted support in place to reduce these. As a result, increasing numbers of children achieve the expected standard by the end of the Reception Year.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established robust systems and procedures for identifying pupils' needs quickly. They draw upon external advice and specialist support to ensure pupils receive

support that enables them to thrive. Leaders provide extensive training for staff to equip them to meet the wide range of pupils' needs.

In the school's specially resourced provisions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), staff deliver bespoke learning activities skilfully. These are carefully matched to pupils' needs. They include practical sessions such as forest school and visits to the on-site farm, as well as tailored academic support.

Leaders' effective partnership work with the local authority ensures that pupils known or previously known to social care receive sensitive support that helps them overcome barriers to learning. Similarly, leaders' use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils leads to success for this group. Many disadvantaged pupils achieve very well in national tests.

Staff are skilled at adapting the curriculum for pupils with SEND and other needs, including pupils with emerging English language skills. They adjust their teaching and provide practical resources. These enable pupils to access the curriculum and experience success. Leaders track pupils' progress rigorously. They refine the support provided to ensure it consistently meets pupils' changing needs.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders know their school inside out. They are well aware of its strengths and areas for development. Leaders' ambitious vision of excellence and citizenship for all pupils drives their decision making. Their rigorous systems for checking how well things are working in all areas of the school enable them to respond rapidly when something needs to improve. Leaders' actions to tackle historically lower achievement and attendance, for example, have made a notable difference. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They use this knowledge to provide robust support, professional dialogue and to act as a critical friend to leaders. This helps drive improvements that are focused on pupils' best interests. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. For example, they oversee leaders' use of additional funding and ensure their systems to keep pupils safe are watertight.

Continuous professional learning is a priority and is closely aligned to the school's improvement priorities. Leaders ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and expertise they need to provide a high-quality education for pupils. Staff appreciate this investment in their future development and are involved in shaping it. They feel well supported and value the consideration leaders give to their workload. Teachers at an early stage of their career value the training and coaching opportunities they receive that enable them to progress.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have carefully designed a programme for personal development that meets the needs of the school community. The curriculum for personal, social and emotional education includes all statutory content, while ensuring that local contextual matters are also covered.

Leaders' vision of 'excellence and citizenship' underpins the curriculum and a programme of wider activities that prepare pupils very well for life after King's Oak.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of the importance of respect and tolerance. The many languages, cultures and religions represented in the school provide a backdrop for this. Pupils celebrate diversity and learn from each other. Through the school council, pupils experience democracy. They know their views are valued because leaders act on them, for example, by providing clubs linked to their interests.

Age-appropriate relationships and health education ensures pupils understand the changes their bodies will go through as they grow and what constitutes a healthy relationship. Pupils learn how to recognise risks in the community and online. They demonstrate a solid understanding of these issues.

The school's pastoral care is high quality. Independence and resilience are prioritised, particularly in the specially resourced provisions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils learn life skills and attributes that will serve them well in adulthood. Leaders use their knowledge of pupils' needs to provide invaluable wellbeing support, drawing upon resources such as the community hub and the on-site farm. Whole-school events such as 'Farm day' strengthen engagement with parents and carers and foster a sense of belonging for all.

Leaders provide a range of wider experiences and activities. Again, these are carefully tailored to meet needs. Clubs are free of charge and open to all. Trips in the local area, workshops, dress-up days and experiences such as a virtual-reality 'Stone Age day' and a mobile planetarium enhance the curriculum and make lasting memories for pupils.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

The school's published outcomes in national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved in recent years and are now close to national averages. This includes for disadvantaged pupils, whose achievement is at least in line with, and sometimes above that of disadvantaged pupils nationally. In reading and mathematics, increasing numbers of pupils achieve at the higher standard. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' outcomes match national averages. These results are particularly noteworthy, given the high levels of mobility in and out of the school and the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make significant gains from their starting points. In some subjects, however, pupils' knowledge is less secure. In addition, the quality of pupils' work is variable. Leaders' actions to further develop aspects of pupils' writing such as handwriting are relatively recent and some gaps persist.

Leaders are tenacious in their efforts to drive up attendance and their work is bearing fruit. Attendance rates are improving steadily. While the overall figure remains below the national average, the attendance of groups such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now close to average. This is because leaders build trusting relationships with pupils and their families. They make adjustments for individual pupils for whom regular attendance has been a challenge. These adjustments result in significant improvements. Nevertheless, a number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Reducing this group remains a priority for leaders.

From the moment children join the school in the early years, well-established routines help them to behave well. Staff understand and apply the behaviour management approach consistently well. This means pupils know what is expected of them. Staff adapt their approach, for example for pupils with SEND. If pupils find it hard to regulate their emotions, staff respond sensitively. As a result, the atmosphere around the school is typically calm. On the whole, pupils show high levels of respect for each other and for staff. They have positive attitudes. Bullying and any form of discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.

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

The school community is highly diverse. Pupils speak a wide range of languages. Some pupils attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils join the school at different points in their educational journey. All are warmly welcomed and included. They quickly develop a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Despite the large size of the school, leaders and staff know pupils extremely well.

Attendance is improving, thanks to leaders' actions to support pupils and their families in overcoming barriers to coming to school. Pupils enjoy learning a broad and balanced curriculum, which leaders have meticulously crafted to inspire pupils and meet their needs. It prioritises the most important knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics, with a sharp focus on building pupils' vocabulary. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge on arrival are effectively addressed, and any barriers they face are reduced. As a result, pupils achieve well overall. Increasing numbers of pupils reach the expected standard in national tests at the end of Year 6.

From the moment children join the Nursery Year, they benefit from warm, caring relationships with staff. These enable them to settle quickly and feel safe. Pupils behave well because there are well-established routines and clear expectations that help them make the right choices. The school's corridors and classrooms are calm. Social times are harmonious. Pupils recognise that bullying occasionally happens, but they trust staff to deal with it.

A range of clubs, accessible to all, offer opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic, musical, sporting and other talents. Leadership roles such as ambassadors and school councillors enable pupils to have their say and contribute positively to school life. The

school's on-site farm provides exciting opportunities for pupils to learn about and care for animals.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure they continue to drive up achievement in all subjects, maintaining high standards of teaching throughout the school that enable pupils to develop secure knowledge and produce high-quality work in all subjects.
 - Leaders should ensure that their work to support pupils and their families to overcome barriers to attendance raises attendance rates overall and reduces the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Claudia Wade.

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 (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with governors, including the chair, and with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes provision for up to 15 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The provision caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils with autism.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection:

The school has expanded and the number of pupils on roll has increased to 851.

The school has extended its early years provision to include babies from 9 months old. Provision for 9-month-olds to 2-year-olds operates under a separate registration and is inspected by Ofsted's early years regulatory inspectors.

In 2025, the school opened a community hub that provides support for local families. This is run by a community interest company.

Lead inspector:

Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Helen Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Judith Sumner, Ofsted Inspector

Michele Geddes, Ofsted Inspector

Charlene Foster, 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

868

Well above 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

936

Well 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)

42.19%

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: 26.3%

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

4.61%

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

13.94%

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 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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	60%	Close to average

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	69%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average

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	54%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	52%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	44%	Close to average

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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	60%	Close to average

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	74%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	61%	58%	Close to average

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	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	59%	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 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	54%	68%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	69%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	67%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	67%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	80%	-12 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	78%	-19 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	74%	78%	-4 pp
2024/25 (final)	80%	78%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	80%	78%	3 pp
2022/23 (final)	61%	77%	-16 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	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	66%	81%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	65%	79%	-14 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	57%	79%	-22 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 (3 term)	6.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	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 (3 term)	19.3%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.6%	16.2%	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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