

Maple Primary School

Address: Hall Place Gardens, Maple Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3SW

Unique reference number (URN): 117298

Inspection report: 27 January 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve very well across the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. By the end of each year, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils reach high outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and in the national key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics assessments. Leaders prioritise the essential skills and knowledge pupils need in reading, writing and mathematics from the moment they join the school. They recognise that pupils start with a wide range of prior learning.

Across the curriculum, pupils speak confidently about their learning and recall it in detail. For example, Year 1 pupils can clearly explain why they met a meteorologist and how the visit deepened their understanding of the weather. They can describe how hurricanes form and where they occur, showing deep understanding of previous learning. Pupils build knowledge securely over time. They apply it with increasing accuracy, demonstrating the positive impact of the school's well-planned curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend school regularly, and the school maintains high levels of attendance. Leaders monitor attendance closely and act quickly to ensure that pupils attend as often as possible. When pupils do not attend regularly, leaders work with families to remove barriers and provide targeted help. They tailor support carefully, and this personalised approach has led to clear improvements. The school awards a weekly attendance cup to the class with the highest attendance, which pupils say motivates them to come to school more often. They enjoy their learning and value spending time with their friends.

Pupils understand the high expectations staff set. They work hard to meet them by aiming for the 'Maple MARK'. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils collaborate positively and show enthusiasm when contributing to learning. Because routines are firmly embedded, staff rarely need to manage low-level disruption. Break and lunchtimes are enjoyable and well organised. Pupils demonstrate growing independence. Trusting relationships between staff and pupils help them feel secure, knowing support will be provided when needed. Pupils understand what bullying is and report that they have not seen or experienced it. They know that if any bullying or discriminatory behaviour did occur, staff would act promptly to investigate and put effective support in place. Those who require additional help to manage their behaviour receive consistent, effective support. This approach helps maintain a nurturing environment where pupils can thrive each day.

Early years

Strong standard ●

In the early years, staff deliver high-quality interactions that strengthen children's learning. They actively promote children's independence and time their support carefully so that it enhances, rather than interrupts, exploration. The carefully planned curriculum guides these interactions and shapes both adult-directed tasks and independent activities. For example,

children have recently been learning about The Three Little Pigs. They work together to build houses for the pigs, using the group-work skills they previously learned. Children then describe their creations confidently, using accurate vocabulary from the story, including words such as 'strong'.

The school uses a well-established phonics scheme. Staff follow it consistently to ensure effective teaching. Teachers identify any child who needs additional support and provide timely, effective help so that all children stay on track. This approach enables children to develop secure early reading foundations, helping them feel well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Partnerships with parents and carers are a high priority. Before children join the school, staff build positive relationships with families to support a smooth transition into school. Parents continue to work closely with staff during the early weeks. The school and families share children's learning and achievements through online platforms. This enables parents to offer further support at home if they wish.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have consistently high expectations for every pupil and take time to understand their individual needs. They use clear, practical approaches that ensure pupils receive the right support and challenge needed to thrive. Staff work thoughtfully with pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities, focusing on developing independence and reducing unnecessary reliance on adults. Visual communication is used effectively across the school to support understanding. For example, visual cues in phonics help pupils recall story sequences and apply learning. Inclusive practices ensure that all pupils can access the resources they need. For example, sound mats in the early years and key stage 1 provide helpful prompts that strengthen early reading.

Clear systems help staff keep track of pupils' progress. Leaders review additional support regularly and make adjustments when needed. Staff benefit from targeted training that develops their confidence and knowledge in supporting all learners. Staff training helps to ensure that technology is used consistently well. Other training focuses on practical adaptations that help pupils learn alongside their peers. Positive relationships with families underpin this work and promote consistently effective support beyond the classroom.

Leaders use additional funding carefully to remove barriers for disadvantaged pupils and support their learning. The provision for pupils who are deaf offers a calm, well-structured environment. Pupils follow appropriate timetables that ensure they receive the right support at the right time.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders continually review the work of the school and always look for the next step in improvement. They do not rest on previous achievements. Instead, they pursue ambitious goals that strengthen the quality of education. They base decisions on an evidence-informed approach and take time to consider what is right for pupils. Leaders involve staff and governors in these discussions, ensuring everyone understands the purpose and intended

impact of proposed actions. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing, reviewing expectations carefully so that improvement work remains manageable and focused.

Governors understand their strategic role and fulfil it with clarity and commitment. They have developed effective structures and processes that allow them to gather first-hand insight into the school's work. They use this information to question leaders constructively and to test the assurances they are given. Their involvement strengthens accountability and supports ongoing improvement.

Leaders ensure that professional development remains relevant, purposeful and beneficial for all staff. When appropriate, they seek external expertise to support high-quality practice. Recently, staff undertook training in adaptive teaching. This now shapes consistent approaches across the school.

An open-door culture strengthens communication and trust. Staff feel confident to approach leaders because they act with openness, care and professionalism. Staff also value the wider school community, describing it as a family that steps forward to offer support when needed.

Staff, parents and carers, pupils and governors all speak with pride about being part of the Maple School community. Everyone works together towards the same shared vision, and this collective commitment drives continuous improvement in every aspect of school life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Staff place a real focus on character development through the 'Maple MARK'. Pupils work hard to achieve this because it recognises when they act in a mindful, aspirational, resilient or kind way. They demonstrate these qualities in different contexts, and staff celebrate these strengths. In key stage 1, pupils build on the 'star of the week', which highlights examples such as helping a friend or showing determination.

Pupils also take on various leadership roles, and staff encourage them to develop responsibility. They can become library monitors, school council members or digital leaders. Some roles are appointed through a democratic process, helping pupils see fundamental British values in action. The school values diversity, and pupils experience this through meaningful opportunities, including visits to places of worship and a recent book project where parents and carers read the same story in several languages.

Sustainability is an ongoing priority for the school. Staff have established an eco council that involves pupils of all ages in environmental work. They promote reducing waste, reusing materials and recycling, as well as considering sustainable travel. The eco council used thermal imaging to identify heat loss around the building, enabling pupils to reduce energy use and contribute positively to the environment.

The school's personal development programme has been embedded over time. Staff link classroom learning to assemblies and visits from external agencies. For example, Year 5 pupils have begun a financial education unit that includes exploring salaries with specialist support. Pupils learn how to build healthy relationships, stay safe online and make informed decisions about contact requests.

Staff understand pupils' individual needs well and offer targeted support for families. All pupils access a wide range of clubs and residential visits. Staff ensure the right expertise is present on every trip so all pupils participate fully, including those who use auditory devices. Pupils thrive because the school provides rich, inclusive experiences.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school delivers a well-established curriculum across all subjects and year groups. Leaders set out a clear rationale for a broad and ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to build important knowledge securely. Staff plan lessons purposefully so they teach the most essential content. They draw on their secure subject knowledge to give clear explanations. This helps pupils understand new ideas and make meaningful links in their learning. Staff sequence learning carefully so pupils revisit and deepen their knowledge over time.

Leaders maintain a detailed understanding of the quality of the curriculum. They use well-structured processes to review curriculum design and teaching practice. They act on what they find. Leaders identify professional development that supports staff to strengthen their practice continually. Recently, leaders have focused on developing assessment, which staff do not yet use consistently. This now needs to embed further so staff can check pupils' understanding of knowledge and concepts more precisely.

Staff prioritise the essential knowledge pupils need in reading, writing and mathematics, alongside developing strong communication skills. They provide targeted support and use adaptations and extra resources to remove barriers to learning. Purposeful learning environments, including interactive displays, reinforce key knowledge. They help pupils retrieve important information with increasing independence.

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

Everyone receives a warm welcome at Maple Primary. Pupils approach new classmates with kindness and respect, creating an inclusive atmosphere from the outset. They recognise that everyone is different. They show awareness of the additional support some pupils need, particularly when communicating. Pupils describe the nurturing climate as a 'supportive community', capturing the school's ethos. Pupils demonstrate this inclusive spirit by using sign language during performances alongside singing, ensuring everyone could participate and feel valued.

Pupils' attendance is high, demonstrating their enthusiasm for learning and school life. They speak proudly about their work and share their achievements with confidence and enthusiasm. Staff provide the right support so all pupils can access the curriculum and flourish. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve very well across the school. Older pupils understand the importance of each subject and how they link to their future aspirations. They set ambitious goals and show determination to

achieve them. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute to a purposeful learning environment.

Pupils behave respectfully and show good manners in their interactions with adults and peers. The school places a clear emphasis on promoting pupils' wellbeing. Pupils know how to seek support when they need it. Pupils explain that bullying does not occur. They feel confident that staff would act quickly if it did. They can put their concerns in the 'worry box' or speak directly with a wellbeing ambassador. Every pupil also has a trusted adult to talk with. This helps them feel safe at school. Well-established relationships between staff and pupils help them address concerns with resilience.

Leadership opportunities exist for pupils of all ages, including roles in the eco council. Members lead whole-school sustainability initiatives and take part in community projects to upcycle and repair items. Links with a partner school in France broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. They strengthen their sense of global responsibility.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to support staff in embedding effective assessment practice so that pupils' understanding is checked precisely and teaching is well informed. This will help pupils secure the most important knowledge and concepts, providing a strong foundation for future learning.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Keith Tang.

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, assistant headteachers, senior staff, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the governing body and local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has provision for 10 pupils with a hearing impairment.

The school does not use an alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Shanti Johnson

Lead inspector:

Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Emma Breckenridge, Ofsted Inspector

Lynda Walker, 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 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

215

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

210

Below 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)

5.58%

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

7.44%

Well above 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

11.16%

Below 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

HI - Hearing Impairment

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	86%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	84%	60%	Above

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	92%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	91%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	73%	Above

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	90%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	96%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	71%	Above

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	93%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	96%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	91%	73%	Above

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	S	46%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	S	62%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	S	59%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	S	60%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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 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	S	68%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	S	78%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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 (2 term)	4.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	5.9%	Below

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)	8.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	16.2%	Below

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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