

Yaxham Church of England Primary Academy

Address: Norwich Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1RU

Unique reference number (URN): 149744

Inspection report: 7 July 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

In this very small school, pupils are well known and treated as individuals. Leaders have created a culture of inclusion that pervades all aspects of school life. For example, trips and enrichment activities are adapted to include every child. As a result, pupils with barriers to learning are made to feel very welcome. They settle in quickly and develop a strong sense of value and belonging.

Leaders identify pupils' barriers to learning on entry to the school. They work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to understand pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that teachers have the information and training they need to support pupils. Individual adaptations are consistently implemented. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They identify any gaps in skills or learning and put extra targeted support in place. This is closely monitored and skilfully adjusted as needed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access a bespoke package of support. Consequently, they make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Pupil premium funding is used effectively to remove barriers to learning. This includes financial support for equipment, access to trips or clubs or more tailored support, such as one-to-one tuition. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They play a full role in school life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a culture where pupils are known, valued and encouraged to flourish. This is underpinned by a programme of personal development that is shaped by the school's Christian ethos.

The personal, social and health education curriculum enables pupils to build a secure age-related understanding of key topics. They talk confidently about online safety, how to stay healthy and what healthy relationships look like. Pupils are thoughtful, mature and reflective. Leaders ensure that collective worship and the teaching of religious education contribute to pupils' understanding of values, equality and respect.

Leaders regularly build high-quality enrichment activities into the curriculum. This allows pupils to explore topics in depth while having fun and developing life skills. The annual 'curriculum week' provides a new focus every day. For example, pupils bring in their pets as part of a focus on living things in science. Pupils appreciate the frequent trips and opportunities to represent their school in sporting events, such as the swimming gala and adapted sports for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Many pupils take on leadership roles, such as prefect or librarian. Their application for these roles extends their understanding of democracy. They develop responsibility and communication skills. Older pupils enjoy giving back to the community. They perform in an annual end of year show and raise money to give back to the school. They demonstrate high levels of care for younger pupils and are powerful role models.

There is a wide variety of after-school clubs available to all pupils. These rotate regularly and are determined by pupil voice. Activities such as gardening, athletics and music help pupils develop new skills and pursue their interests and talents. Leaders are passionate about ensuring that all aspects of enrichment are fully inclusive and accessible to pupils. As a result, the impact of the personal development programme is felt across the school and reflected in pupils' strong sense of belonging and pride.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure that each pupil benefits from personalised support specific to their needs. In general, pupils at the end of key stage 2 achieve well. Published outcomes are in line with national averages.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well through the curriculum from their different starting points. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Typically, they have the knowledge and problem-solving skills to ensure a smooth transition to key stage 3.

Across the school, pupils talk confidently about their learning, demonstrating a secure understanding of key topics. However, outcomes in Year 4 multiplication tests and Year 1 phonics are not consistently secure. Leaders recognise this and have taken effective action to improve the teaching of both areas. Staff regularly review pupils' learning to identify those who require further support. The impact of this is reflected in the work that pupils are currently producing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Although attendance remains below national figures, leaders' work is leading to steady improvements. Persistent absence has reduced to below national averages. Leaders adopt a personalised approach to attendance. They take the time to understand individual circumstances. This is particularly important where pupils have joined the school mid-year or mid-key stage. Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and carers, providing additional support to improve attendance. Where complex barriers arise, leaders liaise with external agencies to support pupils with additional needs to attend more regularly. There is clear impact from this work.

The school is a calm and orderly place to be. Pupils behave well both in and outside of lessons. Relationships are characterised by high levels of respect, care and kindness. Pupils have a shared understanding of leaders' expectations because routines have been securely embedded. Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive. They know that their achievements are valued and celebrated. Pupils feel a strong sense of community and look out for each other. They play and interact well across age groups. There is very little bullying or derogatory language. Pupils trust that staff will help them to solve any problems they have. Staff take a nurturing approach and support pupils to reflect on their decisions. Learning is rarely disrupted because pupils are engaged. They demonstrate consistently

positive attitudes. Where pupils have additional needs, leaders ensure that they receive bespoke support to help them regulate and understand their emotions.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have implemented an ambitious curriculum that is tailored to the needs of pupils. It is sequenced so that pupils build upon their prior learning. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is suited to the needs of mixed-age classes. They have identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn along with subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, pupils talk confidently about their learning with a high level of accuracy.

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching. Teachers find ways of making learning memorable, such as tracking the life-cycle of real caterpillars in the classroom. They regularly check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching as necessary. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to learning engage well and make progress. Staff have secure subject knowledge. Typically, the curriculum is taught well.

Leaders ensure that pupils secure the fundamentals of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are increasingly confident with times tables and handwriting. Where gaps exist, leaders ensure that precisely targeted, additional support is put in place. As a result, pupils quickly catch up with their peers.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have carefully chosen high-quality texts that support pupils' understanding of cultures and beliefs beyond their own. As a result, pupils display a genuine love of reading. They enjoy reading with adults.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised the early years. They have a secure understanding of the quality of the early years provision. They have implemented an ambitious curriculum that prioritises vocabulary acquisition. Children enjoy a well-considered space that supports continuous play indoors and outdoors. Typically, activities are purposeful. Children are happy and enjoy coming to school. They enjoy warm, caring relationships with adults and other pupils.

Pupils settle in well to the Reception Year class because staff take time to get to know them as individuals. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities experience personalised support that helps to remove any barriers to learning. Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and carers. Care practices are suitable, and routines are embedded. This helps children to feel like an important part of the school.

There is a clear focus on developing early reading, writing and mathematics. Children follow a structured phonics programme. Leaders tailor activities and support to best match the needs of pupils. This includes opportunities to develop speech and language, improve fine motor skills and develop positive relationships through supported play activities. However, sometimes, there are missed opportunities to maximise high-quality interactions. Most

children are well prepared to move into key stage 1, although some children do not reach a good level of development.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school, its community and its context. They are passionate about ensuring that every child flourishes and reaches their full potential. They have created a strong culture of inclusion that is founded on warm, caring relationships. Leaders place the best interests of pupils at the centre of their decision-making. They are very proud of their school.

School leaders are well supported by the trust and the local governance committee. In a small school, they have created the capacity to offer a broad and balanced curriculum alongside high-quality enrichment activities. Leaders have accurately identified the key priorities that will support improved outcomes and attendance. Those with responsibility for governance provide a high level of challenge and support. They understand their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. They play a key role in implementing the strategic vision of the school.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They trust that leaders take their wellbeing and workload into consideration. They are a small team who collaborate closely with each other. They feel included in the direction of the school and valued for their input.

Leaders ensure that staff receive timely and useful professional development that is specific to the needs of the school. In addition to this, the trust provides opportunities for leaders and staff to collaborate with other schools through network meetings and trust-wide training events.

Leaders have created positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents appreciate their kind and caring approach and the impact this has on their children's experience of school. The school enjoys a positive reputation within the community.

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

Pupils enjoy school. They are treated and valued as individuals. Staff have a deep understanding of their pupils. Relationships are warm and caring. Pupils feel safe in school. They trust that adults will help them when problems arise. Staff consistently anticipate additional support that pupils might need. Pupils with additional needs are fully included in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils of different abilities and backgrounds feel a deep sense of belonging and thrive.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well, and there is very little disruption to learning. As a result, pupils are focused and make appropriate progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those who are known or previously known to social care. Attendance is improving as leaders consistently anticipate and remove barriers to learning. Older pupils

are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They have the confidence and skills to flourish at secondary school.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other. They are thoughtful, responsible and mature. Older pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility. They look out for younger children and are positive role models. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils have a secure understanding of the school's shared values, which centre around love, creativity and perseverance. They understand how these values link with their daily lives.

Pupils take good advantage of the broad range of enrichment activities available to them. They help to determine the clubs on offer, which include clubs for board games, film and multi-sports. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they get to extend and deepen their learning beyond the classroom. For example, pupils take part in residential trips, carry out geography surveys in a local town and visit the cathedral to learn about the journey of Christmas. These experiences help pupils develop important life skills at the same time as having fun.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed their work to improve pupils' attendance so that absence is reduced.
- Leaders should review the early years provision to ensure that opportunities for engaging children in high-quality interactions are maximised over the course of the day, including in informal times.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Oliver Burwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beverly Tilman.

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 school leaders, including the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO, the chair of the local governance committee and the academies group executive principal. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and pupil Ofsted online surveys.

Inspectors visited lessons to look at pupils' work and the curriculum and to speak with pupils about their learning and wider school activities. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils at

social times and met with groups of pupils. They spoke with a representative from the Norfolk Virtual School.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their position in September 2017.

Headteacher: Jennie Müller

Lead inspector:

Jane Bennett, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Duncan Ramsey, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

75

Well below 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

104

Well 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)

28.00%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

9.33%

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

26.67%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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).

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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	76%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25 (final)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and 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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	46%	Close to average
2022/23		44%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and 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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23		66%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23		78%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp
2022/23		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	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)	11.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.8%	14.6%	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.

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