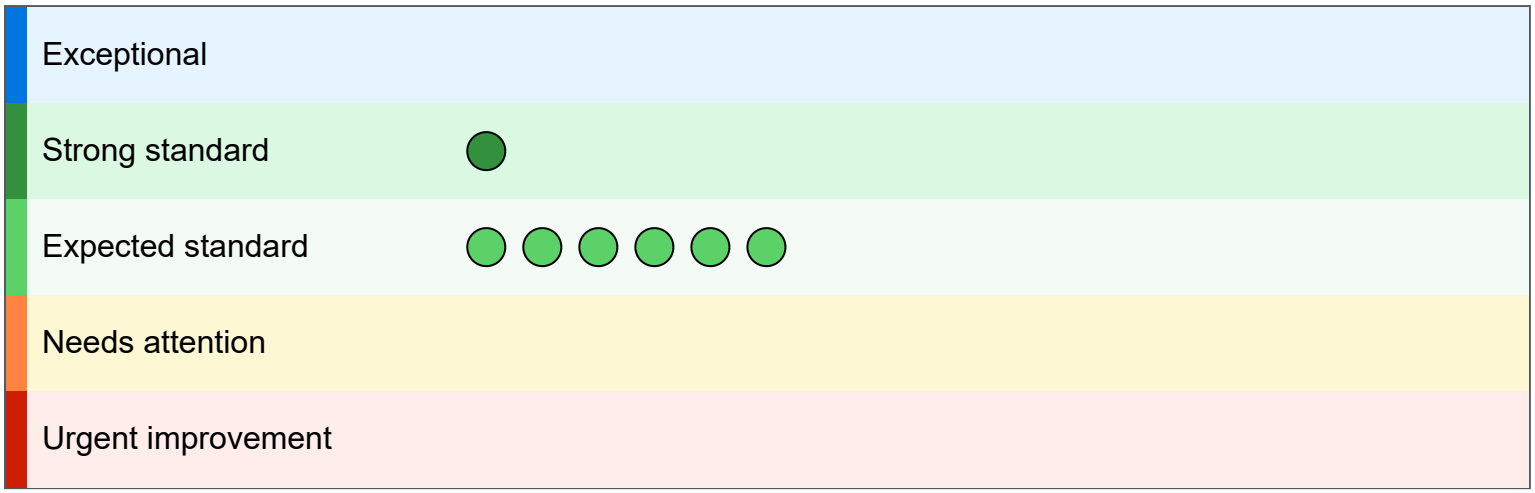
Orchard Lea Infant School

Address: Kennedy Avenue, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 6BJ

Unique reference number (URN): 116224

Inspection report: 28 April 2026



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

Early years

Strong standard

In Reception, children get off to a flying start. Leaders prioritise the early years to ensure children have a confident beginning to their education. They have a clear understanding of the quality and impact of education and care and take effective action when improvements are needed. Strong relationships with parents and carers begin before children start school through home visits and welcome events, which help to build trusting partnerships.

The early years curriculum is carefully thought out in each area of learning. Staff use their detailed knowledge of children's starting points, particularly in communication, language and personal development, to shape learning and address gaps quickly. Developing children's knowledge of important words and their spoken language is a clear priority. In Reception, staff also focus strongly on phonics so children begin to read and write with confidence.

High-quality interactions between staff and children support learning well, including during play and routines. Staff help children to feel safe, secure and confident. Staff adapt their approach for children who need extra support, including for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Calm, well-considered strategies and targeted support help children to develop independence, resilience and their ability to manage themselves well. As a result, children make notable progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils generally achieve well. Although the school's most recent phonics screening outcomes were below the national average, leaders have taken decisive action to address this. Current pupils now acquire the phonics knowledge they need and apply it confidently. They use their understanding of letter sounds to read and write with accuracy and fluency.

Across the school, pupils develop the essential knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. From the early years, children are introduced to accurate mathematical language, which supports secure understanding over time. Pupils progress appropriately through the curriculum and become confident mathematicians.

Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to practise and refine their handwriting. Most form letters correctly and take pride in the presentation of their work. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing additional barriers make suitable progress from their starting points. The gaps in pupils' knowledge close quickly because of the effective teaching and support that staff provide. Overall, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders' work to improve attendance is effective. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages and persistent absence has reduced notably. Leaders monitor attendance in depth and analyse information carefully to identify pupils for whom attendance is a barrier to learning. This enables them to target their support precisely and intervene in issues early. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and demonstrate determination in their actions to help pupils attend school when they should. Clear communication and family-centred support have helped to build trust and confidence with parents and carers. As a result, positive relationships with families support pupils' improving attitudes towards attendance.

Overall, pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe and supported. From the early years, clear routines help leaders and staff to create a calm and orderly environment. Leaders set high expectations for behaviour, which staff consistently reinforce, including during lunchtimes. Behaviour is taught deliberately so pupils understand rules, rewards and consequences. Leaders ensure expectations remain high while making appropriate adaptations for the behaviour of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, where needed. All pupils are fully included in school life and contribute positively to a calm learning environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and how well it is implemented across the school. They ensure that pupils learn a broad and ambitious body of knowledge that is organised in a logical sequence. In key stage 1, the curriculum is adapted carefully to reflect the school's context and the needs of pupils. Leaders also ensure that the early years curriculum provides children with the essential knowledge, language and social skills they need to be well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders place an emphasis on securing pupils' basic skills in spoken language, reading, writing and mathematics. From Reception, children are introduced to phonics and quickly recognise letters and the sounds they make. This enables them to begin reading words with growing confidence. Pupils read books that closely match the sounds they know, which supports their fluency and enjoyment. Pupils who need extra help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive effective support to help them catch up.

Leaders use their understanding of the curriculum and teaching quality to deploy staff effectively and provide training. This supports teachers to develop the subject knowledge they need. Overall, teaching is effective. Leaders recognise some inconsistency in modelling and transcription skills, and they are taking effective steps to address this.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school strives to support each pupil's unique strengths. Leaders ensure that staff identify quickly and accurately which pupils need additional support. Leaders and staff act to help each child to feel included in all that the school provides. As a result, pupils who face

difficulties are generally well supported and make suitable progress from their starting points.

Leaders place a strong focus on supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff think carefully about the resources and support that will aid these pupils' understanding of key concepts. On occasion, some staff are unclear on how best to take the school's step-by-step approach to support the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders are already strengthening staff's expertise and improving the consistency of quality in their work.

Where appropriate, leaders draw on the advice and expertise of external professionals to strengthen the support that the school provides. When support for pupils does not have the desired impact, leaders adjust the school's provision in a timely way.

Leaders use the school's extra funding carefully to ensure that disadvantage does not become an obstacle to pupils' wellbeing and/or learning. Disadvantaged pupils succeed because they are supported and valued.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders are passionate about and committed to improving outcomes for all pupils. They have an accurate understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas for development. As a leadership team, they reflect carefully on their work, identify where changes are needed and take appropriate action to drive improvement across the school. Leaders and governors make decisions in the best interests of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or face additional barriers to their learning or wellbeing.

Governors know the school well and share leaders' ambition for continual improvement. They provide appropriate challenge and support and hold leaders to account effectively. For example, governors have clear oversight of leaders' work to improve attendance and closely monitor the impact of strategies to support positive behaviour. They ensure the school meets its statutory duties, including safeguarding and equality responsibilities, and they have effective ways to make sure of this.

Leaders ensure staff access high-quality, well-planned professional learning that builds their expertise over time and aligns with the school's priorities. Staff value this training and recognise its positive impact on their practice. Leaders also give careful consideration to staff wellbeing and workload when making decisions, helping staff feel valued, supported and involved in the direction of the school.

Leaders have created a united and motivated team who share a clear vision and ambition. Leaders at all levels work closely together and actively develop the ability of the staff team to lead aspects of the school's work. Warm, trusting relationships with parents and carers are a strength. Parents speak highly of the school's compassion, strong communication and effective support for families.

Personal development and wellbeing **Expected standard**

Leaders have designed a coherent personal development programme that supports pupils' wellbeing. It runs through the taught curriculum and is enriched by well-thought-out experiences such as educational trips, meetings with school visitors and experiences of special events. These opportunities link directly to the personal, social and health education curriculum and are revisited across the year so pupils build their understanding well over time.

All pupils take part in the school's programme. Leaders and staff make thoughtful adaptations for pupils who may find some concepts harder to access, including disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of healthy relationships, keeping safe, rights and respect.

Pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of diversity, culture and religion. Leaders have made deliberate curriculum choices, including the study of Hinduism, to widen pupils' cultural awareness. Children in the early years learn about religious festivals such as Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. Carefully chosen texts help pupils see themselves reflected in the school community while learning about others. Pupils also explore moral and ethical issues through stories, discussions and activities focused on fairness, caring for the environment and making safe choices.

Fundamental British values are woven through daily school life. Pupils experience democracy through voting. They learn about the rule of law through school rules and visits from the police. They develop respect and tolerance through lessons and assemblies. Leadership roles, such as house captains and eCadets, help pupils to build responsibility and confidence. Pupils also benefit from a range of enrichment opportunities, including outdoor learning, clubs and music and performance activities. Effective pastoral support underpins the school's programme. Pupils know who to talk to and are confident seeking help. While pupils benefit from the school's wide-ranging programme, some of their knowledge over time is not as deep as leaders intend.

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

Pupils are happy at this inclusive and welcoming school. They feel respected and valued. The school's vision of 'every child, every day' shapes pupils' daily life and learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning alongside their friends. From the early years and throughout the school, staff teach pupils how to recognise and manage their feelings and behaviour effectively. Pupils become resilient and independent. They understand the school rules and most follow them well. Pupils learn in classrooms where staff manage behaviour calmly and consistently. Pupils benefit from lessons that are calm and focused. Playtimes are lively and friendly. Bullying is not a problem here. Pupils feel safe and know that adults listen and help if they have concerns or worries.

Pupils attend school regularly. They know that leaders will support and encourage them to be at school. Staff build pupils' confidence and their ability to follow routines. Pupils are welcomed warmly each morning and settle quickly into learning. Relationships between

staff, pupils and families are warm and trusting. Parents and carers speak very positively about the school and the difference it makes to their children's confidence, learning and happiness.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well. This is because the school has high ambitions for all its pupils. Staff get to know pupils quickly and understand their strengths, interests and needs. Pupils succeed in their learning, helped by the adaptations that staff make to the support and/or learning activities that they provide. Pupils who need additional help, for instance with how they learn or how they feel, receive prompt support from staff. Pupils feel included and successful. Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their progress, particularly in reading and writing.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff embed the changes made to the curriculum and teaching, so that pupils' knowledge builds over time and they progress through the curriculum well from their starting points.
- Leaders should continue their recent work, including on strengthening pupils' transcription skills, reading fluency and the application of phonics, so that pupils' achievement is reflected in above-average outcomes in national tests.

About this inspection

The school is part of The Orchard Lea Federation. The chair of the governing body is Louisa Corta-Carrasco.

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 executive headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils. Inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View and spoke with parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The executive headteacher took up her substantive post in October 2023.

Numbers on roll have reduced significantly since the previous inspection.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Execurive Headteacher: Sarah Ackerman

Lead inspector:
Gareth Flemington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Donna Fox, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

132
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

180
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)

28.03%
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: 26.3%

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

2.27%
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

14.39%
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

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Absence

Overall absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.7%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	18.6%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional

standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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

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