

Great Waldingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address: Folly Road, Great Waldingfield, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 0RR

Unique reference number (URN): 124699

Inspection report: 22 September 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 ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children thrive in Reception. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that brings learning to life. Staff know the children extremely well. Close relationships with families and nurseries helps staff plan activities that capture children's interests and builds their confidence. The thoughtfully designed indoor and outdoor areas are filled with purposeful activity. Carefully chosen equipment and activities develop children's coordination, number knowledge and early reading skills. Across different learning spaces, children paint, balance and jump, measure water and practise sounds. Children eagerly explore the rich variety of learning on offer.

Adults use assessment carefully to adapt teaching. Children with additional needs, including special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive individual support that helps them thrive. Skilful interactions strengthen children's language. Staff introduce vocabulary, revisit words and help children extend their sentences. Drawing club develops children's hand control, creativity and love of stories.

Enrichment opportunities significantly enhance children's learning. A visit to the River Stour develops children's understanding of floating and sinking. They compare this with a Brazilian river to broadens their knowledge of places and heritage. Children achieve very well across the areas of learning. Their knowledge, skills and confidence provide strong foundations for Year 1, where they are ready to build on their success.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Leaders ensure that pupils typically achieve well across the curriculum. This is typically reflected in published outcomes. There is a clear focus on ensuring that pupils in all years, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding, develop a secure understanding of the broad curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. The school carefully tracks pupils' phonetical skills and knowledge. They intervene promptly if anyone falls behind, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. From Reception, staff ensure pupils gain the mathematical knowledge they need to make secure important learning over time. Pupils discuss their learning with joy. They are proud of what they know and can do.

In Reception, children typically achieve above national averages by the end of the year. This means they are very well prepared for Year 1. Leaders ensure pupils in other years are also well prepared for their next stage in education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils attend regularly. Pupils' overall attendance is in line with national figures. Some groups achieve better attendance than their peers nationally. Leaders understand the barriers some families face. They offer them effective support to ensure pupils attend well. Leaders check pupils' attendance closely. They intervene quickly if a pupil misses school. The school provides flexible morning arrangements and emotional support to help pupils who find coming to school difficult. Staff greet pupils warmly on arrival. This creates a happy, positive start to the day.

Leaders have recently changed their approach to ensuring positive behaviour around school. These changes are having a positive impact. In many classes, pupils consistently demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They follow routines well and ensure learning time is not lost. Most pupils demonstrate high levels of respect towards peers and adults. In many classes, low level disruption is rare. Staff are supporting some pupils to consistently meet the school's high standards of behaviour. During social time, pupils enjoy a large area with lots of space to run around. While the majority of pupils play well together, a small number struggle with this unstructured time. Leaders are addressing this appropriately to ensure a consistently calm environment. Bullying is rare. It is dealt with effectively on the rare cases it occurs.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics understanding. In Reception, children get off to a strong start. The curriculum is expertly crafted and delivered to ensure pupils make progress over time. By the start of Year 1, pupils are very well prepared to meet the challenge of their new curriculum. They demonstrate secure knowledge across a range of areas, including phonics. Leaders have made appropriate changes to the writing curriculum. This work is embedding well and helps to ensure that pupils develop their writing skills.

As pupils progress through the school, their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects increases over time. By upper key stage 2, pupils have typically developed a secure understanding across a range of subjects. They are encouraged to think deeply about their learning. They talk confidently about the impact of the second world war on their community. Teachers are skilled at using the lesson time purposefully to ensure learning opportunities are maximised. They check pupils' understanding carefully, including disadvantaged pupils, and address any misconceptions. This ensures pupils can successfully access their independent work.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They recognise the school's many strengths and are taking appropriate action to improve any areas that are less consistent. Their priorities focus on helping pupils learn successfully and thrive at school. Staff are very positive about working at the school. They feel supported by leaders, who consider their

wellbeing and workload when making decisions. Early career teachers receive appropriate support to develop their practice. This contributes to a positive working environment.

Governance is stable and supportive. Governors understand their responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding. They receive information about the school's work and provide support and challenge to leaders. They work with leaders to maintain a focus on pupils' education and welfare.

Professional learning typically supports staff to fulfil their role effectively. Leaders provide opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and expertise. They recognise that further support is needed to help teachers adapt learning more precisely in lessons to provide consistent support to pupils. Leaders accurately identified further work was needed to ensure high standards of behaviour. Their work is having a positive impact on pupils' conduct across the school.

Parents and carers are largely positive about the school. Leaders build effective relationships with families and professionals to support pupils' learning and wellbeing. There is scope to further strengthen communication with families. This includes those with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so parents have a clearer understanding of how well pupils are progressing over time.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have embedded a broad personal development programme. Pupils learn about relationships, healthy living, and keeping safe, including online. Teaching carefully builds on earlier learning. Relationship and health education is appropriate for pupils' ages. Leaders include appropriate checks to ensure pupils remember what they are taught. They adapt the curriculum where needed to ensure it meets pupils' and families' needs. Leaders listen to pupils and parents when reviewing the programme. For example, pupils' feedback helped shape puberty lessons. This was supported by information sessions for parents. The school ensures that pupils develop their understanding of British values and their responsibilities towards others. Roles such as school councillors, librarians and junior road safety officers help pupils contribute to school life and understand their community. Visits from the police and charities reinforce this learning.

Leaders ensure pupils benefit from a range of experiences to broaden their cultural understanding. African drumming, theatre visits and church celebrations support pupils' knowledge of the world. There are a suitable range of music, drama and community events. These provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social and cultural understanding. As well as these opportunities within the school day, there are a range of after school clubs that pupils enjoy. Sporting and music clubs are particularly popular and allow pupils to develop their talents and fitness. Parents and carers join pupils for book club and shared storytelling. These activities strengthen links between home and school and encourage a shared love of reading.

The school's pastoral support of pupils is well matched to pupils' circumstances. Staff quickly identify pupils who need extra care. Enjoyable opportunities such as Early Birds morning provision gives pupils a positive start to the school day. After school clubs are

equally supportive of pupils' needs. Adults help pupils to play and socialise safely. This supports their confidence and friendships.

Needs attention

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders and staff know which pupils have additional vulnerabilities and may need extra support. From Reception, staff understand pupils' emotional and social needs well. They provide high-quality support to ensure pupils are happy and attend well. Leaders use pupil premium funding carefully. This helps disadvantaged pupils access clubs, trips and extra help with their learning.

However, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inconsistent. Leaders recognise which pupils' may have SEND. However, the school does not have a systematic approach to assessing a wide range of potential needs, planning precise support, and reviewing its impact. Some pupils receive targeted help including support with speech and language. While many do benefit from this help, it is not always evident if this support meets pupils' needs over time. This limits leaders' ability to identify what works and what needs to change. Leaders provide information to staff about pupils' needs. However, the information is disjointed. The strategies or adaptations suggested to support pupils are often too broad to have a precise impact. While staff make efforts to adapt learning for pupils with SEND, this is inconsistent in its impact on pupils' learning.

There are currently no pupils attending provision that is not on the school site.

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

Pupils enjoy a broad range of learning experiences. Children receive a particularly strong start in Reception, where activities capture their curiosity. They enjoy a very well-considered learning area where they play together, jump and run and have high quality interactions with the adults. Across the school, pupils enjoy learning. They benefit from a range of different activities to help them remember the curriculum. In science, pupils categorise different groups of creatures together. They correct their work and misunderstandings are addressed. As a result they recall key knowledge which they build on in the following lessons. Disadvantaged pupils are well known by staff. Barriers to their wellbeing are addressed effectively so they feel happy and secure. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, there is support in place. However, it is not always well matched to pupils' needs. It does not consistently address barriers to learning as well as it could do.

Pupils have a secure sense of belonging at school. They attend regularly and enjoy school. Staff know them well and demonstrate high levels of care. The relationships between staff and pupils is consistently warm and positive. Pupils typically get along very well with their peers. They benefit from high-quality relationships across the school. These relationships are strengthened through broader school experiences. Pupils enjoy sports and music clubs,

taking part in plays, and visits. These opportunities support pupils to build friendships and enjoy being part of a thriving community.

Typically, pupils behave well across the school. Historically, there has been more variability in how well pupils behaved. However, this has been addressed appropriately by staff. As a result, pupils typically demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The school atmosphere is generally calm and productive. In the main, pupils behave well during social time. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by staff if it happens.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should develop a systematic assess, plan, do, review process to identify pupils' needs accurately and evaluate whether provision is working so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make secure progress from their starting points.
 - Leaders should develop teachers' skills to adapt teaching when required so that pupils are consistently well supported to access the curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue to embed their high behaviour expectations so that pupils consistently show positive attitudes to their learning and peers.
 - Leaders should strengthen their communication with parents, including parents of pupils with SEND, so that families are well placed to support their children to achieve well.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Richard Stuart.

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 governors, a representative from the local authority, the local vicar, and staff and parents during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Its last section 48 inspection was January 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change to the headteachers.

A new chair of governors took up their position in September 2026.

Co-headteachers: Sarah Baker and Rachel Hutchings

Lead inspector:

Bessie Owen, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Craige Brown, Ofsted Inspector

Vicki Webber, 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

203

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: 268

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)

19.21%

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: 26.5%

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

4.43%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.79%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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	60%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	87%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	29%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	61%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	57%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	29%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	58%	Above

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	83%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	100%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average

‘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	39%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	29%	69%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	66%	-23 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	61%	80%	-18 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	81%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	78%	-7 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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	29%	78%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	77%	-6 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	83%	80%	4 pp
2024/25 (final)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

‘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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	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)	10.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.5%	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.

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