

Tilstock CofE Primary and Nursery

Address: Tilstock Lane, Tilstock, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3JL

Unique reference number (URN): 144983

Inspection report: 6 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a comprehensive and thoughtfully sequenced personal development programme that is woven throughout the curriculum. It reflects a strong understanding of the school's context and ensures that pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need for life beyond school. Pupils speak confidently about the opportunities available to them and value the experiences that broaden their horizons. This includes a wide range of trips, visitors and clubs that enhance learning and support pupils' personal growth.

The programme develops pupils' understanding of respect, equality and diversity effectively. Pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, and can explain how these apply to everyday life in school and the wider community. They treat one another with kindness and consideration, showing empathy and tolerance for difference. Pupils say they feel safe and value check-ins from staff, which they find reassuring. Relationships education is delivered sensitively and supports pupils to form positive friendships. They develop a clear understanding of risks to their wellbeing, both online and offline.

Opportunities to develop leadership are a strength. Pupils take pride in roles such as house captains, playleaders, journalists and safety guardians. They understand that these roles enable them to contribute to school life and support others. Pupils also engage in charitable and community activities, which help them develop a sense of responsibility and awareness of the wider world.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can access the full range of opportunities. Barriers to participation are identified and addressed promptly. Strong pastoral support helps pupils manage their wellbeing and build resilience. For older pupils, leaders provide careful preparation for next steps, including supporting transition to secondary school. As a result, pupils are confident, respectful and well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Despite the challenges presented by the school's context, pupils progress successfully from their starting points, and attainment is improving over time. In recent years, pupils have typically achieved outcomes close to the national average in the Year 1 phonics screening check. As a result, most pupils develop fluency in early reading and use their phonics knowledge effectively. By the end of key stage 1, the majority read with accuracy and understanding. In mathematics, pupils develop secure recall of key facts and apply these in problem-solving activities. Outcomes in the Year 4 multiplication tables check have improved. The most recent published data is now above the national average.

Although published outcomes in subjects are lower than the national average, these do not fully reflect pupils' progression through the curriculum from their starting points. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken a structured and purposeful approach to improving pupils' attendance. Historically, attendance information reflects the complex needs and stability of small cohorts, including those with additional needs. Current rates are broadly in line with national figures and show a steady upward trend over time for most groups of pupils. Leaders analyse attendance information carefully and act swiftly when concerns arise. They work closely with families and external agencies to support improvement. This targeted approach has been effective in reducing persistent absence for many pupils. A small number of pupils still attend less regularly than they should. Leaders are aware of this and have introduced additional strategies, including personalised support and incentives, to encourage more consistent attendance.

Behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Staff apply behaviour policies consistently across the school. As a result, pupils understand the clear expectations set by leaders and staff. These expectations are underpinned by the school's values of hope, nurture, respect, joy, aspire and achieve. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes. Low-level disruption is rare and managed effectively when it occurs. Pupils report that bullying is rare and are confident that staff will deal with any concerns promptly. Staff make appropriate adjustments to support pupils who find it harder to manage their behaviour. This ensures that all pupils feel safe, valued and able to learn well.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years experience a calm and nurturing environment where routines are clearly established. Staff build strong relationships with children and know their individual needs well. This helps children to settle quickly and feel safe. Children play cooperatively, share resources and develop independence through well-established daily routines. These positive foundations are established from Nursery onwards.

Children develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning from Nursery to the end of the Reception Year. Effective use of both the indoor and outdoor spaces develops children's engagement and positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong emphasis on communication and language. Staff model language and introduce appropriate vocabulary during activities. Generally, these support children to express their ideas with increasing confidence and accuracy. However, not all opportunities to extend children's language, vocabulary and knowledge are maximised. Leaders have identified this and are providing targeted support to improve consistency.

Reading is prioritised from the start. Children learn phonics through a structured and consistent approach. Staff regularly check children's understanding and provide additional support where needed so that most keep up with their peers. Opportunities to practise early writing and mathematics are integrated into the learning environment.

Partnerships with parents and carers are positive. By the end of Reception, children are ready for Year 1 with the secure routines and early knowledge that they need.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of their work and ensure that staff know pupils as individuals. They identify barriers to learning and wellbeing promptly and assess pupils' needs accurately. Clear systems are in place to identify and assess pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known to children's social care. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals to build an accurate understanding of pupils' circumstances. This information is used to plan appropriate support.

Staff receive regular training that enables them to apply a staged approach to support and adapt teaching so it remains both accessible and ambitious. Teachers use a range of strategies, including visual prompts and practical resources, and typically match learning activities well to pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils, including those pupils who may be vulnerable, learn alongside their peers and access the full curriculum successfully.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and evaluate the impact of support. Where interventions are less effective, they act swiftly to adjust provision. Alternative provision is used selectively and is well matched to pupils' needs.

Additional funding, including pupil premium, is used strategically to reduce barriers to learning and widen opportunities. This enables pupils to engage fully in school life and, in most cases, achieve well from their starting points.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance work in close partnership and share a clear vision for the school. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. This enables them to identify appropriate priorities and take well-considered action. The school has faced significant challenges historically, including responding to high levels of pupils joining during the school year. This has not distracted leaders' attention away from their overall aim of ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well and feel included in school life.

The trust provides effective support and challenge. Trust leaders maintain a clear overview of the school's performance and offer guidance that is both proportionate and well targeted. This collaborative approach strengthens leaders' capacity to secure sustained improvement.

Governors provide effective strategic oversight. They draw on a range of information to evaluate the school's performance and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors offer both support and challenge, holding leaders to account while ensuring that decisions are rooted in pupils' best interests. They maintain a strong focus on safeguarding, equality and the effective use of resources.

Staff value the positive and collaborative culture that leaders have established. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and wellbeing. Leaders provide a structured programme of professional learning that is aligned with school priorities. This supports staff, including early career teachers, to develop their expertise and confidence.

Leaders maintain constructive relationships with parents and carers. Parents express very positive views about the school and the care their children receive.

Needs attention ●

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Leaders have designed an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum that enables pupils to experience a broad range of subjects. They have established clear expectations for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils receive a structured phonics programme that helps them to develop early fluency. Early reading is prioritised and typically taught well. Leaders are building on this foundation in the early years to strengthen pupils' communication, language and handwriting.

In most classes, teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain key concepts clearly. Where this is most effective, staff support pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary with increasing confidence. Leaders have identified the need for pupils to practise their writing and have increased opportunities to do so. However, they do not ensure that staff consistently support pupils to develop accuracy in their foundational knowledge, including in writing, spelling and letter formation across all areas of the curriculum. As a result, gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge are not routinely identified or addressed.

Learning activities across the curriculum are typically well matched to the intended curriculum. However, at times, some of these activities limit what pupils can do. This leads to unnecessary repetition or missed opportunities to extend learning. As a result, pupils are not able to apply their skills and knowledge consistently well to deepen their understanding across the curriculum. Pupils who face barriers to learning are typically supported well through adapted resources, targeted support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

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

Pupils are happy and proud to be part of this welcoming school community. They arrive each day with enthusiasm and are greeted warmly by staff who know them well. This helps pupils to feel safe, valued and ready to learn. The school's vision, 'Shine bright and reach for the stars,' is understood by pupils and reflected in their positive attitudes, resilience and determination. There is a strong sense of belonging across the school. Pupils describe their school as a place where everyone is included. As a result, pupils attend regularly and arrive on time, ready to make the most of their learning.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. Pupils enjoy their learning and engage well in lessons. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned and make links between new learning and prior knowledge. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment information precisely to build on what pupils already know or address errors in handwriting and spelling. This means that activities do not always deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding or help some pupils develop fluency in writing.

Behaviour across the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils understand the importance of respect and demonstrate this in their interactions with others. They follow established routines well, which supports a positive learning environment. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that staff will listen and take swift action if any concerns arise. Children in the early years settle quickly and learn how to cooperate and share effectively.

Staff work closely with families to reduce barriers to learning and support pupils' wellbeing. They identify barriers to learning and provide support to help pupils overcome these and learn successfully. Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities including clubs, trips and leadership roles. These experiences help pupils to grow in confidence, develop responsibility and understand how to contribute positively to their school and wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that teachers effectively identify and address gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills in writing, so pupils further improve their spelling, handwriting and letter formation in a timely manner.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching across subjects consistently enables pupils to build on their prior learning, enabling pupils to apply their skills and knowledge consistently to deepen their understanding across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Marches Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Finch, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Fry.

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, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and a group of staff to consider their views. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO and representatives of the trust, including chair of the trust board, members of

the local governing body, and with a representative of the Diocese of Lichfield during the inspection.

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 pupils at social times and met with groups of pupils.

Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school runs an on-site nursery for children aged 2.

The school runs a breakfast and after-school club managed by the school.

The school currently uses one alternative provision.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2025.

Executive Headteacher: Rowena Kaminski

Lead inspector:

James Dean, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Anna Vrahimi, His Majesty's Inspector

Usha Devi, His Majesty's 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

122

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

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

23.30%

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

3.28%

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

16.39%

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

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	43%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	40%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

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	54%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	74%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

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	46%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	45%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	71%	Below

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	46%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	40%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	7%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
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	7%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	62%	Below
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	7%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	58%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	7%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	0%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	59%	Below
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	7%	68%	-60 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	0%	69%	-69 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
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	7%	80%	-72 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	81%	-81 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	80%	-63 pp
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	7%	78%	-71 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	78%	-78 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	78%	-61 pp
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	7%	80%	-73 pp
2024/25 (final)	0%	81%	-81 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	79%	-63 pp
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 (3 term)	6.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.7%	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)	15.1%	13.0%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	28.9%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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