

Esher Church of England High School

Address: More Lane, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8AP

Unique reference number (URN): 140650

Inspection report: 28 April 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 ●

Pupils with additional needs receive thoughtful and well-coordinated support. The school identifies needs early and acts quickly to address them. Leaders work closely with teachers, support staff and external specialists so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the right help. Pupils value the support they receive in the 'Willow Building'. This space brings together specialist therapeutic provision so that pupils can settle, regulate and learn. Pupils who need a softer start to the day benefit from calm routines and access to trusted adults who understand their specific needs. As a result of the school's strong work in this area, pupils are included in all aspects of school life.

Leaders use a wide range of evidence-informed strategies to reduce barriers to learning faced by pupils. Staff receive regular training, so they know how to support these pupils well. Leaders check the impact of their work carefully. Pupil premium funding is used well to target resources. Leaders have increased attendance support, funded additional transport and ensured that all pupils can take part in clubs, trips and wider opportunities. These actions are making a positive difference. Leaders work closely with the local authority to commission alternative provision. They check that placements are safe, suitable and in pupils' best interests.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Most pupils achieve well across the breadth of subjects. For example, the proportion of pupils who leave the school with strong passes in GCSE English and mathematics is well above the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not, over time, made the same progress as their peers. Leaders' recent work on inclusion and adaptive teaching is beginning to make a positive difference. The quality of pupils' current work shows that improvements being made in the curriculum and teaching are helping these pupils remember their learning more securely. Pupils are able to recall what they have been taught with confidence. Targeted support that has been put in place for pupils who face barriers to their learning is enabling them to become better prepared for their next steps.

Where pupils have gaps in their knowledge these are addressed, for example for those who cannot yet read at an age-appropriate level. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education. They gain relevant qualifications which enable them to move on to destinations that are well suited to their interests and aspirations.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Attendance has improved over time and is now above the national average. Leaders track attendance closely and act quickly when concerns arise. They work with families, external

agencies and the local authority to support pupils who face barriers to attending regularly. This includes personalised communication, home visits and targeted support through the 'Willow Building'. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are absent is reducing and is now close to the national average.

Leaders have created a culture of care and support which sets the tone for others. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Corridors and social spaces are calm and orderly. Pupils understand the behaviour expectations and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They report that bullying is rare and that staff deal with concerns quickly and fairly.

Leaders have introduced clearer routines, including the 'paired system' in the dinner queue and strengthened mobile phone expectations. These changes have helped to create a respectful and positive culture. Leaders have put in place systems to support pupils to get back on track, such as the 'reflection' and 'focus' rooms. This has a positive impact so that incidents of poor behaviour have been reduced.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that is in place for all pupils. Pupils build a secure body of knowledge over time because teachers connect new learning to what pupils already know. Teachers explain ideas clearly and make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Leaders have set clear expectations and provided training so that teachers know which activities are likely to have the most impact. These routines help most pupils to learn with confidence.

Teachers support pupils to learn new vocabulary well. Leaders ensure there is effective support for pupils who need help with reading. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked library, and developing a love of reading is prioritised. Where pupils need support to develop their skills, there are timely interventions in place to help them catch up. Teachers know pupils' needs well. Leaders provide detailed guidance on how to address barriers to learning.

Most pupils experience a curriculum that helps them achieve well. Leaders know where practice varies and are taking action to strengthen teaching so that all pupils benefit from consistently high-quality learning. However, assessment and feedback are not applied in a consistent way across all subjects. At times, this makes it harder for some, particularly disadvantaged pupils, to benefit fully from the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas they have prioritised for further improvement. Leaders demonstrate a robust understanding of the school's context and the specific barriers faced by pupils. They act in the best interests of pupils and have created a positive school culture underpinned by clear values and expectations. Leaders' work on inclusion, attendance and behaviour is already making a positive difference. They check the impact of their actions carefully and adjust their plans when needed.

Governance is effective. Trust leaders know the school well. They meet leaders frequently, monitor progress against priorities and check that school leaders are taking quick and effective action. Trustees support the school to reduce gaps for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding culture. The local governing body has a wide range of expertise and understands the school's priorities. Governors visit the school regularly and speak with pupils and staff to enable them to see what is happening in school. They offer appropriate challenge and support to make sure that decisions are based on secure evidence.

Leaders engage well with parents and the wider community. Parents speak positively about the school and the support their children receive. Pupils appreciate the positive changes that have been put in place over time. Staff say leaders support their wellbeing and manage workload sensibly. As a result, they feel valued, and pupils benefit from a stable and caring environment.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme that supports their personal development from Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders have mapped this programme carefully so that key themes are revisited in greater depth as pupils grow older. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, online safety, equality and the protected characteristics. They speak confidently about these topics and say the school is an inclusive place where everyone is respected. Pupils are clear that it is safe to be yourself at this school.

Pupils value the 'culture curriculum' sessions delivered in tutor time. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. They understand potential risks and how to reduce them. Pupils learn about different cultures and develop an understanding of diversity in modern Britain. Pupils broadly understand the fundamental British values. For example, they understand how democracy in school reflects decision-making in wider society. Leaders ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education and health education. Pupils speak confidently about this learning and demonstrate secure understanding.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils say staff know them well and help them when they need further support. The 'Willow Building' plays an important role in supporting pupils who need extra help with their wellbeing. Pupils value the calm start to the day it provides and the specialist support available there.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, trips and leadership opportunities. They talk enthusiastically about sport, performing arts and the many societies on offer. Leaders encourage all pupils to take part and track participation carefully. Careers education is well planned. Pupils learn about different jobs, training routes and local labour market information. They take part in meaningful encounters with employers. Pupils in Year 11 receive personalised guidance and move on to a wide range of appropriate destinations.

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

Pupils are happy at Esher Church of England High School and feel part of a caring, welcoming and inclusive community. Developing a sense of belonging is central to the school's ethos. Pupils are encouraged and supported to express their individuality. Pupils value the calm and orderly atmosphere around the site, which helps them feel safe. They know whom to speak to if they have any concerns and trust staff to act quickly. Pupils understand the school's expectations and say that behaviour has improved. Typically, pupils can learn without disruption in their lessons. Pupils behave respectfully towards each other and towards staff. Bullying is uncommon and dealt with quickly and effectively when it happens. Pupils understand the school's rules, including the phone-free approach, and most follow them well.

Pupils feel that staff know them as individuals. Those who need extra help value the support they receive in the 'Willow Building', which brings together pastoral, special educational needs and/or disabilities and nurture provision. Pupils who use this space say it helps them to feel calm, ready to learn and included in school life. Pupils with additional needs are supported to take part in lessons and wider activities.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They talk confidently about what they have recently studied. Pupils benefit from clear routines in lessons and from teachers who know their subjects well. Pupils' overall results in examinations show steady improvement over time. Some would benefit from more help to understand how to improve their work, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with barriers to their learning.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs, trips and wider opportunities, especially in sport and the performing arts. They develop a secure understanding of respect, equality and how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including online. Pupils are proud of their school and the improvements they have seen.

Next steps

- The school should ensure that assessment and feedback are used consistently well so that pupils understand how to make progress in their subjects.
- Leaders should ensure that staff fully consider the specific barriers disadvantaged pupils face, so they are able to support them effectively to achieve and attend well.

About this inspection

This school is part of Enlighten Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mike Boddington, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Coulson.

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, staff and pupils during the inspection. They also held discussions with representatives from the local governing body and the board of trustees.

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

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Guildford. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in May 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2027.

The school makes use of 3 registered and 6 unregistered providers of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Andy King

Lead inspector:

Robert Grice, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ann Fearon, Ofsted Inspector

Philip Wayne, Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Harris, Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Legg, 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

1,130

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,200

Close to 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

19.65%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

3.81%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

5.49%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	60.6%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58.4%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	57.0%	45.3%	Above

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	55.4	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	49.9	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52.0	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.22	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.11	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.5%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	10.3%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.61	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.09	-0.57	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	38.5%	53.1%	-14.7 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	10.3%	52.4%	-42.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.6	50.4	-12.8
2023/24 (final)	37.9	50.0	-12.1
2022/23 (final)	30.4	50.3	-19.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.61	0.16	-0.77
2022/23 (final)	-1.09	0.17	-1.25

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	93%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

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)	7.7%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.7%	9.0%	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)	20.5%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	24.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	28.0%	26.5%	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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