

Copythorne CofE Infant School

Address: Romsey Road, Copythorne, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 2PB

Unique reference number (URN): 116282

Inspection report: 21 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils learn well across the curriculum. Pupils are confident communicators. They have a wide vocabulary and use language confidently to talk about their knowledge in a range of subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged groups, who make suitable progress from their starting points, catch up quickly and achieve well.

Generally, pupils learn basic skills effectively. Pupils' achievement in phonics is particularly impressive. By the end of Year 1, most pupils securely know the sounds that they need to decode words. Pupils also develop secure knowledge of early mathematics. They explain their mathematical thinking in detail, showing a sound understanding of how numbers work. However, while pupils know how to use accurately punctuated sentences to communicate their ideas in writing, some pupils' handwriting and spelling need to improve. This is because some pupils do not form letters correctly or spell words accurately when they write.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils attend school regularly. Mostly, the school's attendance figures are in line with national averages and in some cases are above the national figure. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. When the attendance for specific groups of pupils is too low, leaders take appropriate action to turn this around swiftly. Furthermore, leaders routinely identify pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent. Leaders act quickly and effectively to address any barriers to regular attendance. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very low.

Pupils behave well. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils happily follow securely established routines both in lessons and around the school. In class, they focus diligently on their learning, listen well to their teachers and generally work hard. On the whole, pupils display positive attitudes to learning and high levels of respect for each other and for staff. It is highly unusual for pupils to disrupt the learning of others. Where pupils need additional help to manage their behaviour, carefully constructed plans provide suitable and effective support.

Bullying and unkind behaviour are rare. However, staff have ensured that they have suitable policies in place so that they can address any such incidents appropriately.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching well. They have designed a well-sequenced curriculum. This identifies the important knowledge that pupils must learn and the order in which they must learn it to be ready for their next steps. Leaders work closely with staff to identify practice that supports pupils to learn well and practice that needs to improve.

Generally, staff have secure subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum well, explaining new concepts clearly. Staff use a range of helpful strategies to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who face barriers to their learning to access the curriculum effectively. In addition, staff identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding swiftly. On the whole, staff provide pupils with suitable work and resources to develop their understanding effectively. However, sometimes, activities are not precise enough to enable pupils to practise and reinforce new knowledge and skills.

Learning basic skills is prioritised. Teaching pupils to read is a real strength. Any pupils who struggle to learn to read, receive rapid, well-targeted support. This helps them to catch up quickly. Right from the start of Reception, children learn the skills they need to write legibly, spell accurately and understand numbers. However, some pupils need more opportunities to learn and secure accurate handwriting and spelling.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that children in the early years experience a well-designed curriculum that identifies exactly what children need to learn to be ready for Key Stage 1. Generally, staff support children to learn the curriculum well. Children learn important early English, including phonics, and mathematics knowledge very well. Staff ensure children receive opportunities to reinforce their understanding through play. At these times, staff generally interact effectively with children to explore their ideas. For example, staff engage children in conversations that deepen thinking and enable them to practise using new vocabulary with confidence. While most activities that children access enable them to develop their understanding well, there are occasions when the focus of activities or adult interactions could be refined further.

Right from the start of Reception, staff seek to identify children who may need additional support to achieve well. Leaders use this information to adapt the curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those from disadvantaged groups.

Well-established routines help children to feel safe and secure. Children know what is expected of them. Warm, caring relationships and effective pastoral support contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing. This helps children feel a real sense of belonging and develops their confidence well.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have a well-considered approach to inclusion. They identify pupils' additional needs promptly and accurately using a thoughtful, systematic approach. Leaders ensure that additional support, including individual plans where needed, is put in place swiftly. Staff benefit from regular, carefully designed training that gives them the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils from disadvantaged groups effectively. On the whole, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to access the curriculum successfully. Staff strive to include pupils with SEND and from other disadvantaged groups fully in lessons. When necessary, any pupil who needs it receives bespoke, individualised support. As a result, pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make suitable progress from their starting points and achieve well.

When necessary, leaders seek out specialist support from a range of external partners, such as educational psychologists and the Virtual School. This ensures that pupils who need more tailored, expert support benefit well. In addition, parents of pupils with SEND and those from other disadvantaged groups benefit from regular opportunities to discuss their child's support in full. Leaders make sensible use of additional funding. They use this on constructive strategies to help vulnerable pupils to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school well. They clearly understand the school's strengths and aspects that need to improve further. Leaders are determined to provide a high-quality early primary education for the pupils in their care. Leaders and governors act in the best interest of all pupils, including those from more vulnerable groups. They work hard to promote a sense of belonging for all.

Leaders support staff well to improve their professional knowledge and skills. They readily seek out appropriate, evidence-based training for all staff. In addition, leaders make the most of expertise from across the federation. This ensures that staff benefit from wider links and effective collaborative learning. Leaders expertly link staff professional learning to school improvement priorities. This ensures that teaching continues to improve. Staff appreciate the training and collaboration opportunities they receive. This makes their workload more manageable and helps them to do their very best for the pupils in the school.

Governors understand their role well. They take appropriate steps to assure themselves that the school's provision is effective. Governors routinely assure themselves that pupils are safe. They advocate enthusiastically for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged groups. Governors check regularly that pupils facing vulnerabilities receive the support that they need.

Leaders are positive role models for all members of the school community. They maintain positive relationships with staff and parents. Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the deep sense of community and belonging.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders are determined that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged groups, will benefit from an effective personal development programme. A comprehensive, well-structured curriculum ensures that pupils learn the relationships and health education knowledge required by law. Pupils display secure understanding of the content they have learned. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. They also have an age-appropriate understanding of online safety. For example, they can name websites and applications that are suitable for their use and understand that they are too young to access popular social media.

On the whole, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain, demonstrating a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. For example, pupils understand the importance of voting and fairness within democracy. Pupils have mature social skills and are developing a sound moral code. They demonstrate tolerant and inclusive attitudes. They speak

confidently about how to show respect towards others. However, pupils' knowledge of diversity in modern British society could be strengthened. Leaders have recognised the need to adapt the school's personal development programme so that it is more pertinent to the school's context and to broaden pupils' understanding further.

The school engages well with its community. Pupils learn the importance of giving back to society through supporting charitable projects. They also work well with community volunteers on projects to improve their school environment. For example, pupils learn how to manage vegetation and grow plants by working with a local environmental group and gardening volunteers.

Leaders provide effective support for pupils' mental health and wellbeing. This includes additional pastoral support for those pupils who need it. Pupils relish regular opportunities for taking time to reflect and be still. They also make the most of the times they get to keep physically fit through being active.

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

Pupils relish belonging to this close-knit community. They arrive at school happily every day, ready to work hard and to achieve well. Pupils are confident and articulate. They talk with pride about how much they enjoy coming to school, love learning and feel safe. Leaders are passionate about ensuring that all pupils thrive at the school and succeed both socially and academically. Pupils respond well to leaders' high aspirations and achieve well. They speak confidently about the wide range of knowledge that they have learned.

The school's nurturing culture helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils benefit from secure, warm relationships with adults and with their peers. They trust the adults in school to help them with any worries or concerns. At breaktimes, pupils socialise well. They enjoy the variety of outdoor activities available that make playtime an exciting and engaging time of the day. For example, pupils benefit from resources that promote imaginative play as well as opportunities to be physically active. Learning how to keep safe is an important part of life at this school. Through the school curriculum and by working with external agencies, pupils learn crucial knowledge about fire safety, consent and how to keep safe when online.

Pupils behave well. They show respect towards all members of the school community. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and sustain concentration. Pupils feel safe from bullying and unkind behaviour. These occur very rarely, but when they do, leaders ensure that they are dealt with effectively.

A wide range of additional opportunities enhance pupils' experience. Pupils, including those from disadvantaged groups, access a wide range of extra-curricular activities that broaden their interests and develop their talents. These include sports clubs, drama and dance and French club. Leaders make a concerted effort to ensure that all pupils benefit well from these opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all pupils secure basic knowledge of handwriting and spelling consistently well.
 - Leaders should sharpen the use of effective teaching strategies and adult interactions in all year groups to maximise opportunities to develop and deepen pupils' understanding further.
 - Leaders should ensure that the school's personal development programme is carefully tailored to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jill Cairns.

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 and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Winchester during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Winchester. Its last section 48 inspection was in February 2025.

This school is part of the Oaks Learning Federation. This is a statutory hard federation of 3 infant schools: Copythorne CofE Infant School, Netley Marsh CE Infant School and St Michael and All Angels CE Infant School. This means that this school shares a senior leadership team and governing body with the 2 other schools.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mary Flynn

Lead inspector:

Sue Keeling, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Lucy Phillips, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

71

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

90

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)

12.68%

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: 26.3%

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

2.82%

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

8.45%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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 (2 term)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.2%	5.9%	Below

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 (2 term)	2.0%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.4%	16.2%	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.

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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