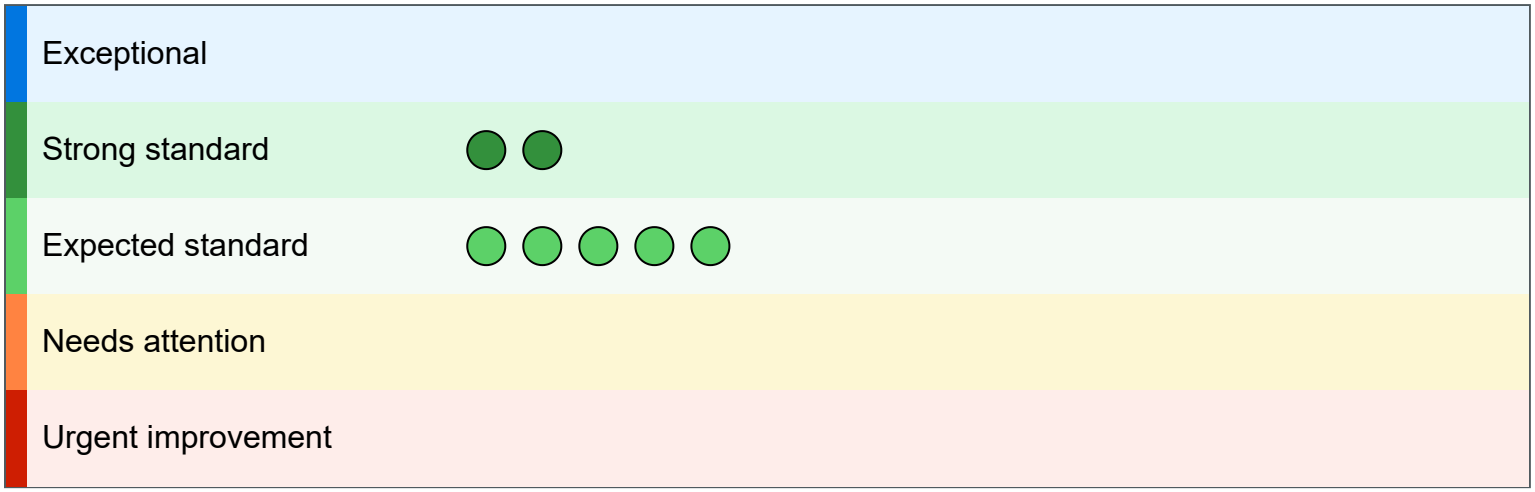
Mandeville Primary School

Address: Mandeville Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 2LE

Unique reference number (URN): 139159

Inspection report: 10 February 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

Inclusion

Strong standard

The school champions a deeply rooted culture of inclusion where every pupil feels recognised, valued and able to thrive. Staff identify any barriers to success and address them swiftly and effectively. The school uses a comprehensive range of strategies to reduce these barriers. Leaders review the effectiveness of each approach with rigour and refine their practice when they see an opportunity for improvement. To do this, staff work with external professionals, pupils and their families to secure the most effective support. This proactive approach ensures that pupils from all backgrounds flourish in all areas of school life.

Leaders invest in rigorous and carefully designed training. This equips staff with a broad range of skills to provide targeted support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders also draw on their extensive expertise to provide training for staff in other schools, including those in the trust. This strengthens their practice even further.

Leaders maximise the impact of the additional funding available to support disadvantaged pupils. They carefully consider how well the school's extra help is supporting these pupils. Leaders change their approach when necessary so that each pupil has the best chance to achieve well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's values shape every aspect of school life. They influence how pupils relate to others. Leaders have planned these out throughout the year. For example, they focus on ‘being kind’ at the start of the year to help pupils build positive relationships. Towards the end of the academic year, staff promote ‘being brave’ so pupils feel prepared for their next steps. Pupils also reflect the fundamental British values in their daily work. For instance, when they create class rules, they show a clear understanding of the rule of law and why it matters. Pupils appreciate and respect individual differences. When kindness or respect slips, pupils quickly put things right. They work with staff to find ways to promote positive behaviours to their peers.

Through the well-planned personal development programme, pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding about healthy relationships. They also learn how to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This knowledge gives them the confidence to make informed and safe decisions, both on and offline.

Pupils use the 'worry boxes' with confidence to share concerns. Staff reinforce this approach in lessons so pupils know adults will listen to them. Leaders track pupils’ needs with great care and pay close attention to those who may need further emotional support. Pupils may spend time with Molly the school dog to feel calm and settled. They practise breathing techniques that support emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Leaders review the school's calendar of opportunities throughout the year to ensure they meet pupils’ needs and interests. For example, by planning a trip to the beach for some pupils that had not visited the seaside. A pop-up swimming pool allows staff to help pupils

learn to swim. By the time pupils leave, they have secure water skills and increased confidence.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils progress well through the curriculum because leaders emphasise developing secure foundations in reading, writing and number. This emphasis begins in the early years. Pupils successfully build subject-specific vocabulary that helps them to express their ideas with clarity. For example, pupils in Year 5 speak with enthusiasm about their learning linked to important people who have tackled controversial issues in the past. They enjoyed preparing a speech for a competition. This strengthened their confidence and communication skills.

Teachers build pupils' learning by revisiting key knowledge and giving them regular opportunities to apply what they know. Pupils gain the building blocks they need to tackle more complex learning with increasing independence. This carefully structured approach enables most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to achieve close to the national averages in the end of key stage 2 tests. A greater proportion achieve the higher standard than is typical in other schools. Pupils leave Year 6 ready for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

The school goes above and beyond to promote regular attendance and works closely with parents and pupils to reinforce its importance. Leaders identify each pupil's specific barriers to attendance and ensure that staff put tailored strategies in place so pupils can attend more consistently. They review these approaches regularly and adjust them when necessary. For example, leaders have adapted their policies to support parents in administering medicines when pupils are unwell yet still able to attend. As a result, some pupils now attend more frequently and pupils' overall rates of attendance have increased. Even so, some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as often as they should.

The school provides a highly positive environment where pupils feel supported to meet clear expectations. Staff demonstrate expertise and confidence in applying the school's behaviour policy. This ensures that consequences remain fair, consistent and understood by pupils. This creates a culture where positive routines are the norm. Pupils rarely need reminding how to conduct themselves. Pupils understand that some of their peers may need additional support to follow the agreed rules, and that this helps everyone to meet the same standards. This approach helps pupils behave with consideration and respect.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school has a clear and well-developed curriculum that builds knowledge and skills in a logical sequence. Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. This enables them to plan staff development that focuses on specific areas. For

example, the school’s focus on oracy is helping pupils to develop the confidence and clarity they need to speak and express themselves clearly.

Teachers generally deliver the curriculum effectively because they have secure subject knowledge and follow the planned sequence closely. On occasion, inconsistencies in this practice mean that the curriculum in some subjects is not taught as well as it could be.

The school places a strong emphasis on securing the core skills of reading, writing and number. This begins as soon as children start in the early years and continues throughout their time at the school. This approach ensures that pupils build firm foundations and feel ready for the demands of secondary education.

Leaders have high expectations for every pupil. When pupils need adjustments to the way they learn, leaders ensure that staff draw on a wide range of approaches that match pupils' needs. This careful support enables pupils to access learning fully and make progress appropriately.

Early years

Expected standard

The early years provides a calm, orderly and respectful environment where children feel secure and are ready to learn. Staff establish daily routines that give children a clear structure. This supports their growing confidence. Leaders have designed the early years curriculum carefully to meet the children's needs. Staff plan activities that deepen learning and respond to children's interests. For example, staff design tasks to support children to develop early writing skills, helping them to practise their letters with enthusiasm. Generally, staff use high-quality language to enrich children’s speaking skills. Staff plan key vocabulary carefully and reinforce it throughout teaching. This helps children to develop confident and accurate language skills.

Reading sits at the heart of the early years. Children enjoy stories and explore the wide range of books available in the environment. Staff teach phonics with precision. Children learn securely as a result.

Staff build strong partnerships with parents and carers through approaches that include 'story cafes' and 'stay and play' sessions. Parents value these highly. These positive relationships strengthen communication between home and school. This shared understanding supports smooth transitions between year groups and helps children feel and be ready for key stage 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders, governors and the trust have a clear understanding of the impact of their work across all aspects of school life. Leaders value the way the local school committee, trustees and trust representatives use their extensive skills to support and challenge them. These groups analyse and reflect on the school's practice with purpose, always placing pupils at the centre of their decisions. Their collaborative approach ensures that every action taken strengthens the school’s provision. They maintain a sharp focus on improving outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have high expectations of everyone. This is reflected in the high standards that staff set for pupils. Staff know that leaders consider their workload carefully and balance it well. They receive thoughtful and relevant professional development that supports the school's priorities and helps them strengthen their practice. Leaders also encourage all staff to pursue their own professional interests and give them time to do so. This has created a team with a broad range of skills and strong subject knowledge. Staff feel valued because leaders prioritise their wellbeing and actively promote a positive and supportive working culture.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the care, guidance and opportunities provided for their children, and they speak highly of the school's personal approach. Many parents comment on how well staff know their children as individuals and how this strengthens their confidence and happiness in school. A typical comment describes the school as 'one big family'. This highlights the strong sense of belonging that is shared throughout the community.

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

Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging to this school community. They benefit from a well-established culture of inclusion. Pupils, staff and leaders all play their part in shaping the positive ethos that flows through the school. This is reflected in warm, respectful relationships built on kindness and empathy. Pupils value their time with friends. They make use of the wide range of activities available in the playground. This helps them to form supportive relationships.

Staff teach pupils clear expectations about appropriate behaviour. Pupils know that these expectations are fair while understanding that at times they may need extra support to achieve them. Pupils appreciate the differences between people in their school community. They treat one another with care. This contributes to a calm atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and poor behaviour is uncommon.

Pupils approach learning with cheerfulness and motivation. They engage confidently because they understand what teachers expect of them. Pupils enjoy the challenge that new learning brings. They explain their work using accurate subject vocabulary. Staff support pupils who face difficulties in their learning, helping them to overcome challenges. This ensures that pupils stay positive about their learning and feel encouraged to persevere. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, some groups of pupils are absent for considerable amounts of time.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities that broaden their life experiences and prepare them to take their place in modern society. Trips to the seaside and visits to museums deepen pupils' understanding of the world. Pupils also gain confidence through public speaking competitions that develop their communication skills. They contribute to school life by taking on leadership roles. Pupils help to improve their environment through planting flowers and decorating stones in the school garden. They build strong links with older residents of the local community by taking part in an intergenerational puppet show.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff teach the curriculum with consistency and depth across all subjects.
- Leaders should ensure that the school's attendance strategy continues to drive improvement in overall attendance, with a specific focus on reducing persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Spiral Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Marcus Cooper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Robin Douglas.

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, deputy headteacher and other staff, along with some pupils and some parents during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the local schools committee, trustees and representatives from the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of no alternative provisions.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery.

Headteacher: Cathy Longhurst

Lead inspector:
Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Ania Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector
Colette Lamb, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

366
Above 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

446
Above 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)

29.57%
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

3.55%
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

20.22%

Above 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54%	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 (revised)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	71%	Close to average

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	79%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	46%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	44%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33%	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	54%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	56%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

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	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	58%	Close to average

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	69%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	56%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	59%	Above

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	46%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	44%	69%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 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	54%	80%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	78%	-32 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	59%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 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	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	79%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	73%	79%	-6 pp

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)	6.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.8%	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 (2 term)	18.2%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	17.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.2%	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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