

# Blackmore Primary School

**Address:** Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore, Ingatestone, Essex, CM4 0QR

**Unique reference number (URN):** 114929

## Inspection report: 12 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 ●

### Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to securing a high-quality start for children in the early years. Leaders draw on effective practice beyond the school to reflect on and strengthen their provision. They have an accurate understanding of children's needs, particularly in terms of their speech, language and physical development. They adapt the provision accordingly. Staff use assessment information to check how well children learn and to identify any additional needs quickly and provide targeted support. Children's wellbeing is prioritised through a safe and stimulating environment that promotes their independence. They benefit from clear routines and supportive interactions, which allow them to thrive socially and emotionally.

The early years curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced, enabling children to build knowledge and skills progressively across all areas of learning. A strong emphasis on early language, communication and phonics supports readiness for later learning. The early years environment is well organised and purposeful. There are many opportunities for children to practise and apply their learning. Children engage in carefully designed activities that promote their skills in problem-solving, communication and collaboration.

Teaching in the early years is effective, with an emphasis on high-quality oral interactions and conversation to support learning. Children benefit from individualised support with their learning in phonics, reading, mathematics and physical development. Teaching is inclusive and responsive to children's individual needs. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, are fully supported to succeed and be ready for Year 1.

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school's inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils are able to participate fully in school life. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion, underpinned by detailed knowledge of individual pupils and their circumstances. They ensure that there is a clear focus on supporting pupils' academic progress and their social and emotional development. There is regular and purposeful communication between staff, families and external professionals. These partnerships benefit pupils and ensure that they receive relevant and highly effective support.

Leaders ensure that pupils' provision maps and communication books identify their needs accurately. Pupils receive support that is highly personalised and responsive. Staff check the effectiveness of this support and make adjustments when needed. Pupils benefit from interventions that support their speech and language development and their emotional regulation. This helps to remove any barriers to their learning. Staff know how to support pupils through adaptations to resources and routines. They demonstrate a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs and apply effective approaches. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access a broad and balanced curriculum. This is enhanced by wider opportunities, including clubs, trips and enrichment activities.

Leaders ensure that the pupil premium strategy is implemented effectively and closely

monitored. School leaders and the governing body consider the impact of the strategy on pupils' outcomes and wellbeing. Additional funding is used to deliver tailored support that addresses pupils' academic and pastoral needs.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils are prepared well for their next educational steps. For example, children's achievements by the end of early years mean that they are set up well for success in Year 1. Typically, pupils' outcomes in statutory tests are in line with national comparators. This includes pupils' achievement with their reading through their phonics learning.

Across the school, pupils accumulate the knowledge and skills they need. On the whole, pupils can describe and discuss their learning. They use appropriate subject-specific language and vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make progress from their individual starting points. Pupils who receive extra help catch up quickly, and the support they receive has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are particularly successful with their writing outcomes.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a clear strategic focus on attendance. This is evident in pupils' attendance being in line with national comparators. Leaders are proactive in their approach to promote regular attendance. They establish effective relationships about the importance of attendance in their communications with parents and carers. All staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the barriers faced by individual pupils. They engage appropriately with parents and external agencies to support improvement. Attendance is celebrated regularly with pupils, who understand why it is important.

Behaviour across the school is positive and is underpinned by well-established and respectful relationships. Pupils understand the clear routines and staff's high and consistent expectations. Pupils demonstrate the impact of these high expectations, including the 'Blackmore Bs', in the way they show independence. Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely positive, and many demonstrate resilience and engagement.

Pupils describe the school as a safe and inclusive environment where bullying is rare. Systems for recording and responding to any concerns are well established and contribute to a culture where issues are managed promptly and appropriately. Inclusive approaches to behaviour are well-considered. These include tailored strategies, such as behaviour support plans, regulation approaches and adapted timetables for pupils who need them. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing additional challenges access their learning successfully.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well designed and sequenced. It includes a clear progression of knowledge and skills from early years to Year 6. Leaders ensure that the curriculum and its content are responsive to pupils' needs and interests. They gather information that allows them to have oversight of teaching and the impact of the curriculum on pupils' outcomes. Generally, the curriculum is taught well and supports pupils to engage in their learning. Staff demonstrate the subject knowledge they need to make sure that pupils build on their prior learning. Occasionally, some staff do not check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions quickly enough. There is therefore some variability in how well teachers use assessment to adjust the curriculum and their teaching.

Leaders ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. Staff teach pupils to read in a consistent way that supports their phonics development. Pupils who need additional help receive it in a timely and effective way. Pupils' vocabulary and language development are a clear focus within the curriculum and in specific subjects. Pupils are supported to be able to articulate their learning.

The curriculum and teaching are inclusive in design. Teaching staff make appropriate adaptations to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Inclusive strategies enable pupils to access their learning and make progress from their starting points.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a strong sense of pride in their school. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This is underpinned by a well-defined vision and ethos, which ensures that actions are prioritised effectively in the best interests of pupils. Leaders understand the school's context well. They promote an inclusive environment where every individual is respected and supported.

Governors are engaged, knowledgeable and committed to the school's success. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and maintain a strong focus on inclusion. They use their expertise to support leaders and hold them to account.

Leaders provide a range of effective training opportunities, which support staff at all stages of their careers. Early career teachers benefit from structured programmes, with strong support from their mentors and induction leaders. Leaders place a strong emphasis on staff wellbeing, particularly in relation to managing workload. There is a clear recognition of the importance of supporting staff to maintain a healthy work–life balance. This approach contributes to a positive working environment where staff morale is strong and individuals feel respected and valued.

Leaders foster collaboration beyond the school. Relationships with parents are positive, constructive and based on mutual respect. Leaders actively promote strong partnerships, which contribute to a supportive and engaged school community. They work closely with other schools, organisations and professionals to enhance expertise and share effective practice. This commitment to ongoing professional learning strengthens the quality of the

provision. These partnerships ensure that pupils receive well-coordinated and consistent support.

## Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a broad and inclusive approach to personal development and wellbeing. They ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of enriching experiences beyond the academic curriculum. There is a clear and strategic intent in the way that leaders promote inclusion, participation and pupils' aspirations.

Leaders promote a strong sense of belonging and community through the celebration of pupils' achievements, both in and out of school. Pastoral approaches and tailored interventions reflect a thoughtful and responsive approach to supporting pupils' wellbeing.

The school provides a structured personal, social and health programme. This is supplemented by wider curriculum opportunities, which introduce pupils to key aspects of social, cultural and moral development. Fundamental British values and protected characteristics are woven through the curriculum and the school's values. However, pupils' understanding of these concepts is not consistently well embedded, with some pupils struggling to articulate these ideas with clarity or depth. Pupils learn about relationships, health and wellbeing, including how to stay safe both online and offline. This learning is reinforced through assemblies and wider school experiences, supporting pupils to develop awareness of potential risks and how to manage them effectively.

The school's personal development offer is inclusive. Participation in enrichment activities, including clubs, trips and visiting speakers, is actively encouraged and monitored. Leaders make deliberate efforts to ensure that pupils with additional needs or adapted timetables are fully included. Pastoral support is a clear strength of the school. Pupils feel safe and value the kindness of staff. Staff use consistent and supportive approaches, such as the 'BRIGHTER hub', to meet pupils' individual needs.

Opportunities for leadership and responsibility, including roles on the school council, the eco-committee and library duties, contribute positively to pupils' confidence, teamwork and development. Pupils speak positively about the range of activities available, particularly at breaktimes and after school, demonstrating high levels of enjoyment and engagement.

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

Pupils feel included and valued as part of a caring and cohesive school community. This is underpinned by the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils describe staff as kind, approachable and supportive. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported effectively to access all aspects of school life.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to take on responsibilities and contribute to school life. They are encouraged by the school's aim to 'Be the best you can be'. Roles on the school council and eco-committee foster a sense of belonging and pride. Pupils enjoy a wide range

of extra-curricular activities and enrichment experiences, which extend their learning beyond the classroom.

Generally, pupils achieve well and demonstrate a positive attitude towards their learning. They enjoy a broad curriculum, which is supported by enrichment opportunities and practical experiences. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. They talk confidently about their learning and build on prior knowledge. When barriers to learning are identified, they are addressed through well-targeted interventions and inclusive practice.

Pupils thrive and behave well. They feel well cared for in the school's safe and supportive environment. Staff set clear expectations and ensure that any concerns are identified and addressed promptly. Bullying is rare and is dealt with appropriately when it occurs. Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected in their high attendance.

The school promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively through its pastoral support. This helps pupils to develop resilience and self-regulation skills. Pupils are prepared for their next steps. This supports the sentiment that 'the future is BRIGHTER at Blackmore'. Pupils embody the school values. They are kind, helpful and happy. Pupils are excited to come to school and make the most of every day.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the personal development curriculum allows pupils to develop their understanding about the fundamental British values and protected characteristics.
  - Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment consistently and effectively to check pupils' understanding and make changes to the curriculum and teaching when needed.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Peter Snelling.

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 members of the school's leadership and the governing body, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Andrea Farrant: Headteacher

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**Lead inspector:**

Louise Cooper, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Nicola Shadbolt, Ofsted Inspector

Alice Early, 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 12 May 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

**166**

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**

**175**

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)**

**13.25%**

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**

**1.81%**

Below 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**

**20.48%**

Above average

**What does this mean?**

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

National average: 15%

**Location deprivation**

**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).

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 | 58%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 55%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 68%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 52%         | 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 | 79%         | 74%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 73%         | 75%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 95%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 72%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 73%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 73%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 74%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 72%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 71%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 73%         | 74%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 89%         | 73%              | Above                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 56%         | 73%              | Below                          |

## 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 43%         | 46%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 50%         | 47%              | Close to average               |

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | S           | 46%              | S                              |
| 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 | 71%         | 62%              | Above                          |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 67%         | 63%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | S           | 62%              | S                              |
| 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 | 57%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (final)       | 67%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | S           | 58%              | S                              |
| 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 60%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | S           | 59%              | S                              |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 43%         | 68%                              | -25 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 50%         | 69%                              | -19 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | S           | 67%                              | S                       |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 71%         | 80%                              | -8 pp                   |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 81%                              | -14 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | S           | 80%                              | S                       |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 78%                              | -21 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 78%                              | -12 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | S           | 78%                              | S                       |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 80%                              | -23 pp                  |
| <b>2024/25 (final)</b>       | 67%         | 81%                              | -14 pp                  |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | S           | 79%                              | S                       |

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 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) | 4.7%        | 5.2%             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 6.0%        | 5.5%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 5.4%        | 5.9%             | 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) | 13.1%       | 13.0%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 16.6%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 17.8%       | 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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