

West Exe School

Address: Hatherleigh Road, Exeter, EX2 9JU

Unique reference number (URN): 145404

Inspection report: 16 June 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 

Pupils generally make good progress and are ready for their next stages of learning. They build their knowledge in each subject that they study and typically perform well in examinations at key stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities usually achieve well and gain the qualifications that they need for their next steps.

In some subjects, pupils' performance in examinations is consistently above the national average. For instance, pupils achieve particularly well in science. Pupils who join the school with lower academic starting points also make particularly good progress. Disadvantaged pupils usually achieve in line with their peers nationally.

Pupils secure the essential skills they need in English and mathematics. This is reflected by above average numbers of pupils achieving at least a grade 4 in English and mathematics GCSEs. Pupils are typically competent readers and broaden their vocabulary through the school's reading programme.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the school's curriculum and teaching. They know where strengths in teaching lie and where further improvements need to be made. For example, they have strengthened the quality of teaching in subjects where pupils have previously not achieved well in examinations.

Each subject curriculum is planned to build on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers generally have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Teaching typically takes account of the needs of pupils who find learning more difficult. For example, teachers usually make suitable adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

On the whole, teachers use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. On some occasions, however, they do not check pupils' understanding well enough. As a result, they do not make suitable changes to ensure these pupils deepen their knowledge.

Teaching ensures that pupils gain the basic skills that they need in English and mathematics. Leaders ensure support is in place for pupils who need support to read more confidently. Most teaching develops pupils' spoken language well. However, teaching sometimes does not develop the accuracy of pupils' written language as well as it could.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify and assess pupils' needs effectively. For example, they work closely with primary schools to gather information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils who face particular challenges to their learning, such as those with SEND. Leaders provide useful information to staff about how to help these pupils learn. On the whole, staff use this information effectively to adapt teaching. When needed, leaders draw on specialist advice from external professionals. This enables leaders to plan suitable strategies to meet pupils' needs.

Children in care receive tailored support. As a result, they feel a sense of belonging to the school. Leaders and staff successfully meet the needs of other pupils known (or previously known) to children's social care services. They work effectively with local partners to do this.

Leaders plan carefully how to make use of the pupil premium funding. They generally ensure that staff make appropriate adaptations to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

Leaders make appropriate use of alternative provision to support pupils' learning and wider development. The school makes suitable arrangements to ensure the welfare of pupils accessing these provisions.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders generally have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, they identify where teaching needs to be strengthened and take action to make improvements.

Through an effective professional learning programme, leaders develop teachers' subject knowledge. Staff at all levels, including leaders, have opportunities to learn and develop. This includes teachers who are newest to the profession. Like other staff, they receive the support and opportunities that they need to develop their teaching expertise.

Trustees and local governors typically provide sufficient support and challenge to leaders. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, such as maintaining close oversight of safeguarding. Trustees and local governors support leaders effectively to build positive partnerships with other schools and organisations. These bring benefits to pupils.

On the whole, leaders provide sufficient information to enable trustees and local governors to hold them to account. However, at times, leaders do not gain precise enough insights into the impact of their work. For example, they do not consistently use information about pupils' attendance or participation in wider opportunities to inform improvements. As a result, trustees and local governors sometimes do not hold leaders to account as well as they could.

Leaders generally build constructive partnerships with parents. This usually contributes positively to pupils' sense of belonging and achievement.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders, trustees and local governors support staff wellbeing and ensure that their workload is manageable.

Leaders have designed an appropriate personal development programme. Through the 'West Exe Baccalaureate', pupils gain important knowledge of healthy relationships. They learn how to keep themselves safe online and how to look after their mental and physical health. Leaders ensure that this programme is tailored carefully to the school's context and national trends. This helps to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the future.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as respect and the rule of law. They are taught that prejudice and discrimination should never be tolerated. Pupils have opportunities to understand representation and global institutions, such as the United Nations. By voting for tutor group 'MP's', pupils participate in their own democratic processes. Some pupils have leadership roles, such as prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors or sports leaders. These positions build pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility.

The school's careers programme builds pupils' understanding of their future options. They have opportunities to engage with a range of employers. They find out about post-16 and post-18 education providers. For example, pupils participate in work experience, attend careers fairs and visit local universities. These experiences help pupils learn about vocational and technical routes, as well as the academic options. Leaders keep the careers programme under review. They use information about local employment trends well to shape the programme's content.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities through the school's 'electives' programme. Leaders have designed this programme to help pupils gain a range of different experiences. These extend from board games to fitness, for example. Some pupils participate in school productions or musical concerts, while others learn how to climb. Opportunities such as these develop pupils' wider talents and interests.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

While leaders have appropriate ambitions, a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), remain consistently below national averages. Leaders have sharpened their analysis of attendance patterns. They have started taking effective steps to reduce pupils' absence. However, the school's support has only recently started to have a positive impact on raising some pupils' attendance. For example, older pupils and pupils who face challenges, such as disadvantaged pupils, do not attend well enough. As a result, some pupils continue to miss learning and opportunities to benefit from the school's wider offer.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. As a result, lessons typically proceed without disruption. Leaders and staff usually deal with bullying or unkind behaviour effectively. Consequently, most pupils have confidence in the school to prevent further incidents. Leaders track trends in behaviour and bullying. They use this information well to

identify which pupils need support to improve their behaviour. This has resulted in reduced rates of suspension. Pupils with SEND, who require adjustments to help their behaviour, receive the support they need.

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

Pupils generally enjoy their learning and are prepared for the next steps in their education. They typically receive effective teaching and progress well through the school's curriculum. Pupils' achievement is reflected by published outcomes. These show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, generally perform in line with national averages in most examinations. In a few subjects, pupils achieve particularly well, such as in science and mathematics. Pupils who need additional support with their learning generally achieve well too. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically receive the help that they need to succeed.

Most pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to build friendships and skills. For example, pupils participate in national and international visits, such as Paris or Munich. These experiences develop their cultural knowledge and confidence to travel. Pupils participate in clubs and activities. These build their teamwork and leadership skills. Pupils are proud to represent the school in productions or when running events with local primary schools.

Pupils' attendance has only recently moved in line with the national average. However, some pupils still do not attend well enough. Levels of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils, and those with SEND, are consistently well above the national average. Older pupils do not attend as well as younger pupils. As a result, a significant minority of pupils miss out on learning opportunities and wider experiences.

Pupils are safe and generally behave well. Their learning is not often disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils typically have positive attitudes to learning. On the whole, pupils and parents have confidence that the school tackles bullying effectively.

Next steps

- Leaders should raise further pupils attendance, especially the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
- Leaders should ensure that they gain precise insights into the impact of their work, so that they adapt strategies to bring about continuous improvement and give assurances of this to those responsible for governance.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers check consistently that pupils have gained intended knowledge, so that teaching can be adjusted to tackle any misunderstandings that pupils have.

- Leaders should raise their expectations of the quality and accuracy of pupils' written language, so that pupils produce high-quality work across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Moira Marder, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Mulcock.

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.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, school leaders, teachers, trust leaders, trustees and local governors during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses 9 alternative providers, including 7 that are unregistered.

Jamie Engineer: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

James Oldham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Richard Barnes, Ofsted Inspector

Rob Matthews, His Majesty's Inspector

Dan Chapman, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Wilton-Rhead, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,236

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

1,300

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)

20.39%

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

4.61%

Above 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

13.51%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

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)	50.7%	45.4%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	53.4%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58.5%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

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)	47.0	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48.4	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49.2	46.3	Close to average

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)	0.16	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.42	-0.03	Above

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)	33.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.0%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	34.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.8	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.4	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)	-0.40	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	-0.57	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' 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)	33.3%	53.1%	-19.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	32.7%	53.1%	-20.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	30.0%	52.4%	-22.4 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)	34.9	50.4	-15.6
2023/24 (final)	38.8	50.0	-11.2
2022/23 (final)	36.4	50.3	-13.9

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)	-0.40	0.16	-0.56
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	0.17	-0.25

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)	92%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	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)	10.0%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.8%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	26.0%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	29.0%	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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