

Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge

Address: Reades Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 9LN

Unique reference number (URN): 146103

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 

Across the curriculum, pupils achieve well. They gain a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills which enable them to move on to successful next steps in further education or training. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who need additional support to secure foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics make positive progress from their individual starting points. The extensive reading curriculum enables pupils to read with increasing accuracy and fluency. As a result, they have the skills they need to access the full curriculum.

Outcomes in national examinations at the end of key stage 4 improved in 2025 compared to previous years. Leaders' actions to address historical inconsistencies in the quality of teaching meant that pupils achieved broadly in line with national averages. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers continues to close.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders are accurate in their understanding of the strengths of the curriculum and where ongoing improvement is needed. The curriculum is well designed and sequenced to help pupils build secure knowledge over time. Support from the trust has enabled teachers to strengthen their subject expertise.

Leaders have established consistent expectations in how the curriculum should be delivered. Teachers explain new material clearly. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to remember what they have learned previously, so they can make connections between increasingly complex ideas. Teachers make appropriate adaptations for pupils who face barriers to learning. For example, when needed, they break learning tasks into smaller steps to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who have not secured the foundations in reading, writing and mathematics benefit from small-group support led by expert staff.

On the whole, teachers check that pupils have understood the things they have been taught and alter their teaching appropriately when needed. Occasionally, teaching is not always adapted precisely enough to address misconceptions so pupils can move on as quickly as possible. Leaders have prioritised pupils' language and vocabulary development. Plans are in place to ensure that teachers routinely provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to apply technical vocabulary in their verbal and written responses.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders work effectively to identify the needs of pupils who have barriers to their learning. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders ensure that staff receive helpful information about how best to support pupils in the classroom. They ensure that staff receive ongoing training. This enables staff to adapt support in response to pupils'

needs. Where pupils need specialist support, leaders use their knowledge of external agencies to help vulnerable pupils with more complex needs. 'The Hive' provides a supportive environment where pupils with SEND receive caring pastoral support if they need it. Leaders regularly review the support that pupils receive.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to support pupils' academic and personal development. For example, additional help with reading enables pupils to access the full curriculum. Leaders work productively with the virtual school to ensure that personal education plans meet the needs of pupils who are known to social care. The use of alternative provision is carefully considered. Placements are chosen to meet pupils' needs effectively. Leaders review placements frequently to ensure that they continue to be used in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clear direction for the school. They know the school well and have focused their improvement priorities in the right places. Leaders have taken effective action to bring about greater consistency in the curriculum and its delivery. Pupils are at the heart of leaders' determination to provide the very best education.

The professional learning programme is comprehensive. Leaders ensure that staff continue to refine their practice. The trust has supported leaders and staff at all levels to develop their subject expertise. This has led to improvement in pupils' achievement across the curriculum and in national examinations. Attendance rightly remains a priority for leaders. Leaders have appropriate ambitions and expectations for pupils' attendance. Their actions are starting to show signs of improvement.

The trust continues to support the school's journey of improvement effectively. Those responsible for governance are knowledgeable about the school's priorities. There are effective systems in place to review leaders' actions. They equally support and challenge leaders on the actions they take to secure improvement. Those responsible for governance share leaders' ambitions for pupils. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities. This includes ensuring that funding is used to enhance the opportunities of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff are proud members of the school community. They appreciate the support that leaders provide for their workload and wellbeing. Those at the early stage of their career value the opportunity to learn from more experienced staff in school and across the trust. Leaders establish positive relationships with parents. Parents speak highly of the actions that leaders have taken to strengthen behaviour and the quality of teaching.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

There is a comprehensive and coherent programme of personal development. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to revisit important topics. It builds their knowledge in an age-appropriate way over time. Pupils develop detailed knowledge of personal safety. This includes how to identify the signs of an unhealthy relationship and where to get help. Pupils know the dangers associated with drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping. They are mindful about spending too much time online and know how to manage

risks associated with social media. Pupils demonstrate openness and tolerance of difference. The philosophy and religion curriculum exposes pupils to important national and international issues. They spend time debating these and learn to be respectful of differing views. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths through the 'culture day', where they experience different food and traditions from around the world. As a result of the curriculum offer, pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.

The careers provision is highly effective. Pupils are provided with frequent experiences to engage meaningfully with local employers and further education providers. Impartial guidance ensures that pupils are knowledgeable about how to move on to their next steps. Consequently, pupils move on to positive destinations.

Caring staff know their pupils well. 'The Hive' provides a nurturing environment where pupils receive pastoral support that helps them with their wellbeing and to manage their emotions. Leaders engage the expertise of external agencies if pupils need specialist, one-to-one intervention to support their wellbeing.

Pupils across the school take on a range of leadership roles, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are proud to be sports leaders, anti-bullying ambassadors and members of the school council. They see the value of helping others in the wider community. This includes supporting pupils in the local primary school and visiting residents in a local care home. Pupils further develop their resilience and independence through participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Attendance is not as high as it should be. Over time, pupils' attendance has remained below the national average and persistent absence has remained high. Leaders know the context of the school well and understand the barriers which individual pupils face in attending school regularly. They have taken action to address low attendance. This includes increasing staffing capacity and analysing trends in individual pupils' attendance closely. Leaders use this information to provide support for pupils who need the most help to attend well. There are signs that attendance is starting to improve but this remains a priority for leaders.

Leaders have strengthened their expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the clear routines that leaders have established. These are applied consistently by staff. Consequently, behaviour around the school is calm. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are typically attentive and want to learn. Pupils are respectful of each other. They proudly report that bullying and other types of discriminatory language are not tolerated. They trust that staff will take swift action should they occur. Following leaders' reset of behaviour expectations, suspensions increased. These are now reducing rapidly and used appropriately. Pupils who require more help to meet the school's high expectations are well supported in 'The Hive' provision. This includes, but is not limited to, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge. They are greeted warmly each day by staff who know them well. Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the day. They interact positively with their peers and value the respectful relationships they build with staff. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will deal with any bullying or unkindness should it occur. As a result of the school's positive culture, most pupils attend regularly. However, absence is not reducing as quickly as it should for some pupils.

Pupils embody the school's values of 'be inclusive' and 'work together'. They demonstrate mature attitudes to what makes everyone different. Consequently, pupils feel included in all aspects of school life and free to be 'whoever they want to be'. They celebrate diversity and are keen to learn about different cultures and faiths. They are well prepared for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Clubs such as the debate society, the literary film club, pride and unity club, sports and the performing arts help pupils develop their independence and confidence. Pupils who experience barriers to their learning participate widely in these activities.

Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum which is generally taught effectively. They are supported to develop secure knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their next steps in education or training. As a result of recent improvements in the delivery of the curriculum, pupils now typically achieve in line with national averages in examinations at the end of key stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their individual starting points. This is because they receive effective support to access the full curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that processes to increase pupils' attendance are accurately evaluated and monitored effectively to ensure that all pupils attend well.
 - Leaders should continue their work to ensure consistent delivery of the curriculum. They should ensure that teachers routinely address misconceptions and adapt teaching where needed so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in all subjects.
 - Leaders should continue to ensure that teachers provide regular opportunities to extend pupils' language and vocabulary, both spoken and written.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathon Peck, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Jones.

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.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, teachers and trust leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO and those responsible for governance.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their post in January 2025.

The school currently makes use of 14 alternative provisions, including 12 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Emma Bliss

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Alison Robb-Webb, Ofsted Inspector

Wendy (Martin) Martin, Ofsted Inspector

Ian Cooksey, 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

421

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: 1,067

School capacity

934

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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.70%

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: 28.9%

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

6.41%

Well 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

29.45%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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).

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)	44.8%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	24.0%	45.3%	Below

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)	44.3	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.6	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.4	46.3	Below

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)	-0.40	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.39	-0.03	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' 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)	17.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	10.0%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	7.1%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	30.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	28.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.4	35.0	Below

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)	-0.93	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.91	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	17.4%	53.1%	-35.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	10.0%	53.1%	-43.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	7.1%	52.4%	-45.3 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)	30.4	50.4	-20.0
2023/24 (final)	28.5	50.0	-21.5
2022/23 (final)	27.4	50.3	-22.9

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)	-0.93	0.16	-1.10
2022/23 (final)	-0.91	0.17	-1.08

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)	88%	92%	Not available
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Not available

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)	11.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.5%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	29.1%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	29.3%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.7%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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