



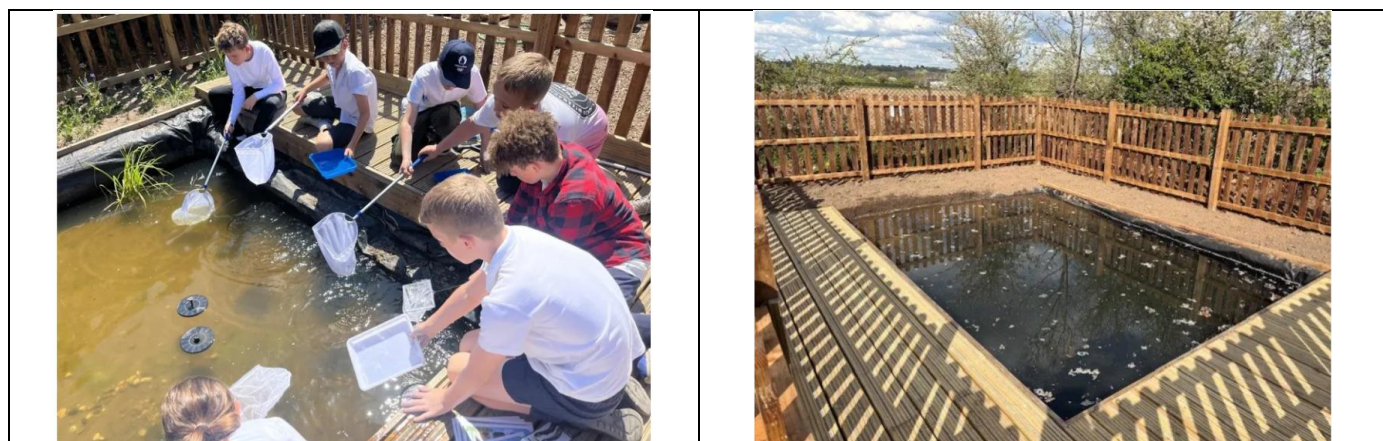
Dedham Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
January 2025 – December 2025

The school now has 201 pupils on roll and 36 members of staff, including 12 teachers

- Children from a Minority Ethnic Background: 10.9% (38.4% national)
- Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL): 2.0% (23.4% national)
- Children with Free School Meal entitlement (at any point in the last 6 years): 8.5% (24.7% national)
- Pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support: 7.0% (14.8% national)
- Pupils with an EHC (Education, Health & Care) Plan: 3.0% (3.5% national)
- Absence rate: 3.8% (5.2% national)

Mrs Gemma Chester has been headteacher of Dedham Church of England Primary School for three years now and as a school, we celebrated our 200th birthday in 2025. The school was founded by Edward Betts in 1825 who put down some money for a school to help 'educate the poor'. Now, as a Church of England primary school, we continue to keep this founding principle at the heart of what we do. 'Guide each of us to be a light to the world' is our school vision, inspired by Matthew 5:14-16, and it encourages all at our school to be the best that they can be for the benefit of themselves and for the benefit of others.

As part of our 200th celebrations, we had a pond installed in the school grounds and a summer house was put on the school playground for Lego building and colouring during lunchtimes. Classes also communicated with children on the other side of the Atlantic in Dedham, Massachusetts. Children in all classes wrote and received letters and some children also managed to negotiate the five-hour time difference to be able to meet their penpals online! In addition to this, during the summer, a project entitled 'Faces of Dedham' invited children to create portraits of one another. These artworks formed part of a public portrait trail through the village, exhibited alongside contributions from the Dedham Art Society, residents of Blackbrook care home and historical works from the Munnings Art Museum.



The school pond is used as part of the Forest School curriculum and the science curriculum. We are very grateful to Dedham Parish Council for their generous donation.

Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) sets out the priorities for each year and can be found on the school website. In the academic year 2024-25, the action points were:

- Middle leaders to lead their subjects through curriculum change, ensuring sequencing, progression and improved standards
- Middle leaders to raise the profile of foundation subjects
- Develop the role of the SENDCo and Inclusion Lead
- To further develop children's and staff's understanding of spirituality

- To further develop children's understanding and respect for difference and diversity
- Raise standards in Reading and Writing in KS1 and KS2
- To re-develop the foundation subject curriculum
- To raise standards of handwriting and presentation across all subjects
- To ensure implementation of retrieval practice
- To re-develop the EYFS curriculum
- To enable children with SEMH needs to demonstrate positive behaviours throughout the day
- To reduce low-level disruption and negative learning behaviours in lessons

We were especially pleased with our Key Stage Two data in 2025 which demonstrates the positive impact that teaching and learning has on our children during their time at Dedham.

Assessment	Statistic	Cohort	School Result	National Comparison	National Result	School Percentile Rank
KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths combined	% of pupils achieving the expected standard	29	83%	🟢 Above (significant)	62%	93rd
KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths combined	% of pupils achieving the higher standard	29	17%	🟢 At or above	8%	90th

In November 2025, the school received its SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. The full report can be found here <https://www.dedham.essex.sch.uk/resources/9da401fd-4811-4cb6-9d2b-c5162f7b51a1> however the key points from the inspection can be found below.

Notable Strengths

- *Leaders, including the governing body, and the staff, are deeply invested in Dedham as a Church school. Central to their work is a well-understood Christian vision that is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. This creates a loving culture where pupils and adults are known and valued as being unique people. As a result, the school community feels a deep sense of belonging and wellbeing.*
- *The vision guides and drives decisions by school leaders, including governors. It empowers clear strategic planning, reflecting the needs of the school.*
- *Partnerships, including with the local church and Chelmsford diocese, are strong and support the school to live out the vision effectively. As a result, the school is a vibrant community that continues to grow.*
- *The creative curriculum inspires and motivates pupils and ignites their love of learning, giving opportunities to 'shine their light'. Carefully selected extra-curricular activities and trips enrich the breadth of learning that pupils encounter.*
- *Collective worship is a valued part of each day, providing meaningful moments to gather together. The spiritual development of adults and pupils is enhanced. This is through music, stillness, as well as times to reflect on teachings, including Bible stories.*

Development Points

- *Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum and continue to ensure it is broad and balanced, with creative approaches for pupils to learn.*
- *Strengthen the ways in which the whole curriculum enables deeper thinking about challenging injustice. This is to help pupils identify opportunities to make their school and the wider world a better place.*

In 2025, the Dedham Ecclesiastical Lectureship Trust once again kindly funded a visit to St Pauls for our year five children and our partnership with Elizabeth Selby Infant School in Tower Hamlets continues to grow with children visiting each other during the year. During 2025, plans were put in place to enable the children to support each other with their work in RE, with opportunities planned in the RE curriculum for the children from Elizabeth Selby to share their experiences of Islam, and the children from Dedham to

share their experiences of Christianity. It is hoped that this will help all children to better understand these two faiths and how faith impacts upon daily life.

Over the past year, Rev Phillip and Richard Hopkins have continued to lead collective worship in school. We have also welcomed the Open the Book Team (led by Fiona Taylor) back into school once or twice a term. We are really grateful to the whole team for giving up their time to deliver these assemblies because the children really enjoy them. Other worship during the week is led by Mrs Chester, Miss Valentine, class teachers and our Worship Team. Our Worship Team is made up of volunteers from Class 6 who, supported by Miss Valentine, plan and lead worship in classes each week. Each week links to a bible story and Old Testament stories formed a large part of the planning for this in 2025.

We continue to attend the church for a whole school assembly at the end of each term which is well-attended by families. Our Key Stage Two Carol Service also continues to be held in the church and the Key Stage Two Choir enjoys participating in the annual village carol service. Antony and Gabbie Watson continue to be very valued members of the staff team, and Antony's support and guidance with whole school music-making and worship is greatly appreciated.

We continue to work closely with Lawford CE (VA) Primary School and Highfields Community Primary School. This partnership is entitled the Constable Collaborative Partnership (CCP). Over the past year, the schools have once again supported each other with peer reviews, moderation of assessments and staff and governor training, in addition to members of the SLT being a 'listening ear' for each other. During 2025, we have worked particularly closely as a group of schools looking at the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Laura Valentine
Deputy Headteacher
March 2026