

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School

Address: Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent, DA16 3QG

Unique reference number (URN): 101455

Inspection report: 15 April 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.

Exceptional

Achievement

Exceptional 

Pupils achieve exceptionally well and are thoroughly prepared to progress successfully to the next stages in learning. Excellent outcomes in national tests are sustained over time. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is significantly above national averages. Pupils in Year 6, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are completely ready for their secondary schools. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check are significantly above national averages. This reflects the school's relentless focus on ensuring that all pupils develop key knowledge and skills at an early stage.

In the wider curriculum, achievement is equally impressive. Pupils have remarkable recall of their prior knowledge. They use this confidently to make meaningful links to their current learning and across subjects. The work in pupils' books is consistently high quality. Pupils with SEND make rapid progress from their individual starting points.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Attendance is exemplary. Leaders share their high expectations for attendance and punctuality with pupils and families. Pupils want to be in school as they do not want to miss out on the exciting learning. Leaders rigorously track pupils' attendance and punctuality. They work closely with pupils and families to support and overcome any barriers to regular attendance. For example, learning mentors successfully work with pupils who have any concerns or anxieties about school.

Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are highly engaged and focused on their learning. Pupils live out the school values and demonstrate great respect and kindness for each other. From a young age, pupils learn to resolve conflicts and respectfully challenge actions or opinions they feel are not right. There is no bullying at the school and pupils know it will not be tolerated. They are confident that adults will deal with any poor behaviour. Playtimes are joyful and happy. Pupil play leaders arrange games for the younger pupils, modelling the school's high expectations of respect and friendship. Leaders and staff provide support and adaptations to ensure that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, know how to regulate their emotions and have success with their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which engages and enthuses pupils in their learning. Learning is meaningful and closely connected to the school's context, for example through the study of geographical locations linked to pupils' heritage. Learning is sequenced

progressively to allow pupils to build knowledge over time. Well-chosen class texts, for instance, develop pupils' vocabulary and imagery that supports their understanding across the wider curriculum.

Highly effective teaching of the foundational skills of reading, writing and number provides pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills to access the curriculum. Reading is a school priority and begins with precision teaching of phonics. Teachers create a love of reading and pupils enthusiastically make book recommendations to their peers. Teachers provide targeted and precise support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure they access the full curriculum.

Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. They use this to expertly question pupils to support and extend their thinking. Teachers carefully check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. Exciting and purposeful activities engage pupils and deepen their understanding of new concepts. A rich language environment ensures that pupils, including those with English as an additional language, use subject-specific vocabulary well.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders place a high priority in ensuring that all children have a highly successful start to their school life. The well-planned curriculum ensures that children are equipped with the foundational knowledge to begin their learning journey. Children swiftly build the phonics skills to access reading and develop early writing. They gain secure number knowledge which they apply successfully to their independent learning. For example, serving the correct number of items in the class roleplay café. Teachers prioritise opportunities to build children's language and vocabulary. Staff expertly develop children's communication through high-quality interactions. They are fully aware of who needs targeted language support and engage these children in meaningful conversations.

Leaders work successfully with families to ensure that children settle in quickly. They provide a wide range of opportunities to involve families in their child's learning and development. Leaders and teachers are swift to address any barriers to learning that children display. They ensure that the right support is in place to meet children's individual needs swiftly. As a result, pupils across Reception make rapid progress from their starting points and are well prepared for key stage 1.

Children love the exciting, expertly planned learning environment. They engage in learning for sustained periods, independently practising what they have been taught. Children know and follow the embedded routines which results in a calm and purposeful environment where children work happily together.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Inclusion is central to every aspect of leader's work and staff know each pupil well. Leaders quickly identify any additional learning or emotional needs. They act swiftly to ensure that pupils have the essential knowledge, confidence and social skills to access and enjoy learning. This rigorous approach and highly effective provision addresses pupils' learning needs, providing them with excellent foundations for learning.

All staff are highly trained to understand and effectively support pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Precision support and therapies target barriers to learning in line with pupils' individual support plans. Where appropriate, leaders work with external professionals to meet pupils' specific learning needs. As a result, pupils with SEND and those with barriers to learning achieve remarkably well and thrive in the school community.

The school celebrates inclusion. Teachers expertly teach pupils to work collaboratively. This results in supportive classrooms which enable all pupils to fully participate. Vocabulary development and oracy are a priority to ensure that pupils with SEND and those with English as an additional language have the communication skills to access the curriculum. Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive bespoke support and enrichment opportunities, enabling them to achieve highly.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders, governors and staff demonstrate an unwavering determination and commitment to develop and enhance the educational offer for all pupils. School priorities focus on enhancing and embedding actions to ensure that all pupils, including those with barriers to learning, make exceptional progress. Leaders' approach goes beyond academic outcomes to ensure that pupils thrive socially and are fully prepared to succeed in future learning and life.

Governors have extensive knowledge of the school through active engagement in school life. They have a robust understanding of their statutory responsibilities, offering purposeful support to help the school realise its priorities. Leaders are keen to learn from others and take on board new initiatives to further support pupil development. Their leadership skills and work have been widely shared as they support other schools on their improvement journey.

Staff are rightfully proud to work at the school. They value the substantial professional learning on offer and support for their careers. Leaders' commitment to staff learning and wellbeing creates an environment which is enthusiastic, exciting and innovative and results in pupils making great progress. Staff exemplify the school's high expectations, which are reflected in the positive and supportive relationships between staff and pupils.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the school, commenting on staff's commitment to nurture and support children and the extensive enrichment opportunities. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for families to be involved in school life. For example, workshops to understand local safeguarding concerns and opportunities to see pupils performing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils benefit from a carefully considered and aspirational programme to support their wider development. The personal, social, health and economic programme, which includes relationships education, threads through all aspects of school life. This is complimented by the school's ethos and commitment to teaching core life values, for example, charity, dignity and collaboration. Pupils demonstrate their extensive understanding of an inclusive society through their great respect for each other. Cultural and religious differences are celebrated

and ensure that pupils are proud of their heritage. The key principles of fundamental British values are applied to school life. Pupils talk of their democratic school where they can vote for pupil leaders and have their voices heard, for example.

Leaders are acutely aware of potential safeguarding issues that pupils may face. They provide extensive curriculum enrichment to ensure that pupils are prepared for a safe life, both in the community and online. For example, participating in a project delivered by offenders to understand grooming and gang culture. Leaders provide bespoke support to meet pupils' individual personal development needs. For instance, pupils practise using public transport to help overcome anxieties about travelling to secondary school. Learning mentors provide pastoral support and therapies to help pupils, such as when dealing with bereavement.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a rich wider curriculum, including clubs, visitors to school and well-considered educational visits. Leaders provide opportunities to help expand pupils' understanding of the wider world. For example, learning opera in the music curriculum and attending professional performances.

Pupil leaders are proud of the role they play in creating a happy school community. Year 5 buddies model the school's high expectations and help children in Reception. The Green Council oversee the planting and growing of fruit and vegetables which they sell at the market to raise money for charity. Pupils demonstrate great awareness of their citizenship responsibilities. They enjoy arranging a tea party and providing musical entertainment for local parishioners, for example.

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

Pupils thrive at this school. They demonstrate a love for and obvious enjoyment in their learning. Pupils are proud to share their knowledge, giving detailed information and engaging others by asking their thoughts and views. Wonderful relationships between staff and pupils creates a trusting environment. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' as they are safe in the knowledge that staff will support them. Staff have a thorough and precise understanding of pupils' individual needs. They act promptly to ensure that pupils can succeed in their learning and develop emotional wellbeing. Pupils across the school achieve remarkably well and significantly above their peers in national tests. They are fully prepared and confident for the next stages in learning.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils demonstrate respect and kindness towards each other. Pupils live by the values of the school, knowing that they contribute positively to the school and local community. Pupils display resilience and determination in their learning. They work highly effectively together to support and learn from each other. Classrooms are a buzz of enquiry, discussion and knowledge-sharing with pupils focused and engaged. Pupils feel safe in school. They have the skills to resolve issues and conflicts but know that staff will help if needed. Bullying is not tolerated and pupils show great respect for each other. Pupils enjoy school and do not want to miss out on any learning. This results in overall high attendance.

Pupils benefit from an extensive enrichment programme. They appreciate the opportunities to try new sports like fencing and trampolining. A wide variety of trips enhance pupils' curriculum understanding. For instance, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament to better understand democracy. Older pupils relish the opportunity to learn new skills and develop independence on residential trips. Pupils are proud to represent their school in the wide range of sporting and musical events.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should continue to seek improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils, including those who may have barriers to learning.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Nigel Fisher.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with leaders, governors, the school improvement partner and representatives from the local authority and diocese during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Southwark. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Ms Susan Oram

Lead inspector:

Sacha Husnu-Beresford, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joanna Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Jeanie Jovanova, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Crockatt, 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 15 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

418

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

420

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)

5.02%

Well 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

1.91%

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

8.37%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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	91%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	60%	Above

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	94%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	95%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	73%	Above

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	95%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	95%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	71%	Above

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	94%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	95%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	95%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	73%	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 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	78%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	75%	44%	Above

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	87%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	83%	60%	Above

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	91%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	92%	58%	Above

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	91%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	100%	59%	Above

‘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
Latest 3 year average	78%	68%	11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	69%	16 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	75%	66%	9 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	87%	80%	7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 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	91%	78%	14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	92%	77%	14 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	91%	80%	12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	100%	79%	21 pp

‘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 (2 term)	3.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.4%	5.9%	Below

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)	4.1%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.6%	16.2%	Below

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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