

Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School

Address: School Lane, Antrobus, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6LB

Unique reference number (URN): 111246

Inspection report: 31 March 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 

Overall, pupils' attainment in national assessments is close to national averages. This includes the proportion of Year 1 pupils that meet the standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to read new words and sounds. Most pupils are confident readers by the end of key stage 2. Despite this, achievement in the Year 4 multiplication check remains consistently below national average. Leaders have begun to address this and pupils are increasingly able to recall facts with greater accuracy.

Generally, books show that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they have secured the building blocks for later success in English and mathematics. However, some pupils in other year groups sometimes struggle to quickly grasp the basics of writing, particularly with handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

Pupils progress well through the rest of the curriculum. They develop an appropriate body of knowledge that sets them up effectively for the next steps in their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

School is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well and value learning. Mutual respect between staff and pupils is evident both in classrooms and during breaktimes. Children understand why it is important to be in school. Pupils and staff work to the mantra 'Ready, Respect, Reach'. Staff have a blueprint for behaviour, and this ensures consistency in approach. Pupils, including those in the early years, work collaboratively and support each other. For example, reception children routinely help each other to put on and fasten cycling helmets to make sure they are safe before using the bikes.

Leaders have taken action by employing an attendance champion. This has helped identify the barriers that some families face in achieving positive attendance and punctuality. They have introduced more rigorous systems to track pupil absence and they work with the local authority where necessary. Leaders act quickly to support families and have seen attendance improve as a result.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum model. It typically builds pupils' learning securely over time. The curriculum covers the essential learning in reading, writing and mathematics alongside other subjects. Leaders have outlined clear end points for pupils to reach in each subject.

Reading is taught effectively alongside promoting a love of reading. Leaders have prioritised the important foundational skills in writing, spoken language and mathematics. This helps to address gaps in pupils' knowledge that have occurred over time. Leaders have focused on important skills for writing, such as letter formation, handwriting and spelling. To improve mathematics, they have started to address weaker outcomes in the Year 4 multiplication

check. These improvements are at an early stage of development and need more time to embed.

Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to teach the range of subjects across the curriculum. Typically, staff use a range of teaching strategies well. These include recapping and revisiting previous learning and building vocabulary. Staff also use careful questioning to check pupils' understanding. Generally, staff adapt their teaching well to meet the range of pupils' needs.

Early years

Expected standard 

The high quality of the school's early years provision ensures that children have a positive start to their school life. By working closely with families, staff provide a nurturing learning environment that helps children settle into school well.

Leaders have established a well-sequenced curriculum that prepares children for the next stage of education. The design of learning ensures that it is meaningful and engaging. Staff make effective use of resources to enhance learning experiences. In addition to the carefully considered indoor environment, teachers ensure that outdoor learning opportunities are maximised. As a result, children quickly develop a love of the great outdoors. Staff know children well and identify children who may have barriers to learning. Leaders ensure that support is provided for these children.

Leaders prioritise early reading. Children develop a genuine love of books and the essential knowledge and skills needed to support their future learning. By the time they move into Year 1, many children can read words accurately and have developed a secure knowledge of phonics.

High-quality interactions between staff and children underpin all aspects of provision. Staff model care and kindness. This is reflected in the respectful and positive relationships evident across the setting. As a result, children become confident learners.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff collaborate with families. They ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make a positive start to school life. Pupils settle quickly into established routines. This partnership contributes to pupils feeling secure and supported from the outset. Staff have a detailed understanding of pupils and their individual circumstances. This underpins an inclusive culture, where pupils are recognised, valued and empowered to succeed.

Leaders take a staged approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. Where more specialist or intensive support is required, leaders work well with external professionals to put this in place. This approach helps to reduce pupils' barriers to achievement. Pupils also benefit from well-structured social environments that help them feel fully integrated into school life.

Leaders prioritise pupils' emotional health and wellbeing. They ensure that support systems are both effective and responsive. Provision for pupils who are disadvantaged is considered.

Leaders have implemented their pupil premium strategy. However, they do not always monitor progress rigorously enough. This means that, on occasion, they do not act quickly enough to tackle or address pupil's barriers to learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The well-thought-out personal, social, health and economic curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, both physically and mentally. Pupils are taught to understand what forms bullying can take. They develop skills to tackle this and learn how to get help and support if bullying occurs. Pupils are supported in understanding healthy relationships. They learn how to communicate boundaries in order to keep themselves safe. Pupils celebrate and embrace difference. They can confidently discuss the importance of fairness and respect for all individuals. Pupils can give examples of why this is necessary by discussing prejudice and discrimination. They can discuss different faiths and cultures and make comparisons to their own beliefs.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from the school's opportunities to develop wider talents and interests. Clubs are well attended. Pupils thrive in wellbeing clubs, art clubs, sports and music. Older pupils have opportunities to participate in enterprise initiatives. They are challenged to set up mini businesses that link to the local community and charities. This also helps them to learn about finance. Leaders carefully plan trips, residential and visitors to school. This develops and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding of modern Britain. Leaders are extremely proud of the local community but recognise that pupils need to access and experience the wider, more diverse world beyond their context. Pupils speak positively about leadership roles, including positions, such as wellbeing leaders, librarians and school council members. They take pride in contributing to the school community.

Needs attention

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, leadership and governance oversight is not sufficiently well developed to secure sustained improvement. Systems and processes can lack strategic design and robustness. This is evident in areas such as the pupil premium strategy, which is designed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders and governors are not able to evaluate the impact of actions with sufficient precision. In addition, staff responsible for the implementation of this do not always have clear guidance. These weaknesses reflect a lack of training and support for leaders and governors. This results in uncertainty about their roles in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Despite this, leaders are proud of their role. They have a detailed understanding of their pupils and the community context. Leaders want the best for pupils, families and staff. Staff, parents and carers alike are extremely positive about school life. Parents praise the school leadership and staff for being approachable, friendly and their ability to meet their children's needs well. Staff feel valued and have appropriate professional development opportunities.

They trust leaders and feel that they carefully consider workload implications and wellbeing when introducing new initiatives to move the school forward.

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

The caring staff team greet pupils warmly each morning. Pupils are proud to attend this small, close-knit school. Relationships are well established. Adults know pupils well. This helps pupils to start the day positively. Leaders prioritise attendance and punctuality. They provide effective, focused support to families when it is needed.

Pupils feel a genuine sense of belonging to the school community. They behave well and play harmoniously. Pupils make excellent use of the well-equipped and rich outdoor play environment. They trust staff and know how to share any worries. Pupils are clear that bullying is not an issue. They feel safe, included and known as individuals. Pupils learn about how to manage risks effectively, including when working or playing online.

Pupils generally achieve well. They enjoy lessons and participate with enthusiasm. The calm and purposeful learning environment celebrates pupils' work and supports their learning. Leaders ensure pupils benefit from regular outdoor learning. Pupils, including those in early years, thrive in this carefully planned provision. Leaders are focusing on improving pupils' writing. This is helping to ensure that the curriculum prepares pupils for their next stages of education and for later life. However, in some aspects of school life, leaders and governors do not have a sharp enough oversight. This means that the strategies and processes can lack rigour, so are not as effective as they should be.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of well-considered opportunities to deepen their understanding of the wider world. For example, a trip to London gave insight into diversity and city life. Pupils who represent their classmates on the school council or as mental health leads take their roles seriously. Pupils value kindness and relish opportunities to be 'Good Samaritans' in school. These roles develop pupils' confidence and prepare them for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should enhance their strategic oversight and challenge. This will make evaluative work systematic and improve practice. It will also help governors offer the right support and challenge to leaders, ensuring actions achieve the desired impact.
 - Leaders should ensure that the pupil premium strategy is monitored effectively with a particular focus on writing to ensure that vulnerable pupils make the best possible progress.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lisa Rigby.

The school is part of a federation called The federation of Antrobus St Mark's C of E Primary School and Great Budworth C of E Primary School.

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 the executive headteacher and other school leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in October 2025.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

The school provides before- and after-school care.

The executive headteacher of this federation is Rhian Perry.

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Lead inspector:

Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Nicky Parkinson, 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 31 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

76

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: 272

School capacity

105

Well 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)

7.25%

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

1.32%

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

1.32%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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

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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	55%	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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	100%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55%	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
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24		46%	
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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24		62%	
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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
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
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
2022/23 (final)	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
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	
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 (2 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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 (2 term)	11.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.7%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.0%	16.2%	Above

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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