

William Gilpin Church of England Primary School

Address: Pilley Hill, Boldre, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 5QG

Unique reference number (URN): 116353

Inspection report: 10 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.

This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

In the past, messages about the importance of being in school on time and every day have not been clear enough. Attendance has been significantly lower than in other schools nationally. Punctuality has been an issue. Interim leaders have set out their stall clearly. The unequivocal expectation is that pupils are in school unless there is good reason. Unexplained or unnecessary absences are chased swiftly. Pupils recognise that 'the new man does not like you going on holiday'. There has been a marked improvement in attendance and a drop in the number of pupils late to school since January.

Pupils know that they should be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Most are, most of the time. There is, though, an air of tardiness in the way many pupils come into school in the morning. Some are easily distracted in lessons. There are inconsistencies in the way this is handled. Sometimes, this puts their classmates off what they should be doing. There are variations too in the way that good behaviour is recognised and rewarded. This does not go unnoticed by pupils. Social times are enjoyable. Pupils of all ages get on well together. Incidents of unkind behaviour are rare and resolved effectively.

Early years

Needs attention 

Leaders have made sensible use of external support to develop the early years provision this term. The curriculum plots what children should know and be able to do term by term. This gives clear milestones for staff to check children's development against and to identify any who need extra support to keep up. It is, however, too soon to see the impact on children's learning over time. Activities in the classroom have greater purpose than those outdoors.

Staff are mostly experienced in teaching in the Reception class. They make sure that one of them is on the door in the morning to greet children and be there if parents need a quick chat. Routines are established, with an emphasis on nurturing children's social and emotional development. At times, though, adults are a bit too quick to do things for children rather than helping them to become independent.

Typically, experienced staff talk with children to develop their vocabulary and support their learning. This is not necessarily the case when other adults are working in there. The teaching of early reading and writing skills is precise. Children with education, health and care plans receive suitable support.

Urgent improvement ●

Achievement

Urgent improvement ●

Pupils are not learning as well as they should. They are not developing the reading, writing and mathematical skills that they need to achieve as well as pupils have done in the past. Work is in hand to fix this but has not had time to have a positive impact. Over time, disadvantaged pupils have not fared as well as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as they might. Those capable of reaching the higher levels underachieve.

The lack of coherence in the curriculum means that there are gaps in pupils' learning across other subjects. The quality of the work that pupils produce is not consistently of an acceptable standard. Pupils are not equipped with the essential vocabulary, knowledge and skills they need to give them a secure foundation for what comes next. They lack enthusiasm for their studies.

Curriculum and teaching

Urgent improvement ●

The curriculum in most subjects is disjointed. Plans to review what pupils should learn were put on hold nearly a year ago. Significant and frequent changes in staff mean that teachers do not know for certain what pupils have already learned. Where published schemes of work are used, they are not adequately adapted for mixed-age classes or for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Interim leaders know how a curriculum should be designed to build pupils' learning over time. Work is in hand to introduce a new curriculum and upskill staff to deliver it, but this is yet to happen.

Teaching is too variable. At times, it is inaccurate or reinforces errors or misunderstandings. Not enough attention is paid to securing pupils' basic skills. Too often in other subjects, teaching is focused on imparting interesting facts rather than on what is essential learning. Teachers know who the pupils are in their class who may have barriers to learning. This does not typically translate into the extra support or attention that these pupils need. Pupils who are capable of extending or deepening their learning are not sufficiently challenged. Interim leaders have started work to improve teaching.

Inclusion

Urgent improvement ●

The school is aware of the challenges some pupils face, but their needs are not met effectively. Concerns raised by the local authority 18 months ago about provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not been remedied. Until very recently, the school did not meet its statutory requirements to complete the paperwork and reviews for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Capacity during the period of interim leadership to follow this up has been very limited. EHC plans are now in place but are not broken down into what staff need to do to support in the classroom. Unqualified support staff are often left to do the best they can.

Work to improve day-to-day provision for pupils who most need it is at a very early stage. There are no individual plans to speak of for pupils with SEND who do not have an EHC plan. Interim leaders have earmarked pupil premium grant funding to develop high-quality classroom teaching, but this work is very new. Teachers have only very recently been trained to identify pupils who might have barriers to learning. They do not have the experience and expertise to adapt teaching to meet these needs.

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement ●

Capacity to bring about the many improvements needed is poor. Governors have not held leaders to account with any rigour in the past. Consequently, they did not realise the seriousness of the school's position soon enough. Governors have not acted in pupils' best interests by turning down external advice and support to bring about the necessary improvements. They do not understand their responsibility to promote equality and inclusion.

Interim leaders have quickly highlighted the school's significant shortfalls. They have prioritised actions accordingly, but they have not had sufficient time to reverse the school's decline. The phrases 'on a journey' and 'in its infancy' are frequently used to describe where the school is. This is against a backdrop of substantial staff turnover and high numbers of inexperienced and temporary staff working in school.

Everybody recognises that current leadership has significantly strengthened the safeguarding culture in school. Staff understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe and know the signs to be alert to. A determined focus on attendance has brought about a marked improvement, although it still sits below national averages. Work has started to improve teaching and learning to upskill staff to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is, though, a long way to go before these initiatives bear fruit.

Personal development and wellbeing

Urgent improvement ●

Too much is left to chance when it comes to fostering pupils' personal development. Interim leaders have had too many other things to do to have time to devote much attention to this aspect of the school's work.

The school uses a published scheme of work to teach personal, social and health education, but it has not been adapted to take into account the mixed-age classes. This is compounded by new staff not knowing what has gone before. As a consequence, learning is patchy. For example, Year 6 pupils have missed out on learning about managing money. There is insufficient consideration given to how what is on offer may need to be adapted for pupils with complex need, for example when teaching about healthy relationships.

Wider opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are extremely limited and at a cost. Financial support to open up the couple of clubs that do run to all pupils is not well advertised. The school does not track take-up of clubs to see who is benefiting.

Pupils' understanding of the values that are essential for people to live alongside each other harmoniously is underdeveloped. There is little substance to the leadership roles that some

hold. Pupils are accepting of differences within their immediate experience but do not recall studying other cultures. They are not currently having religious education lessons.

Pastoral support is better. In the main, despite the many changes, staff know pupils and their individual circumstances. Relationships are warm and caring. Those who use the breakfast and after-school clubs enjoy the downtime with their friends.

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

Leaders have not acted quickly enough to stem the decline in the quality of the school's work since the last inspection. This has had a negative impact on pupils' experience. Staffing turbulence has compounded that. On the whole, pupils do not have especially positive attitudes to their learning. They do not achieve as well as they should. This is particularly the case for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The most able pupils are not challenged enough.

Pupils bear the brunt of a curriculum that is not fit for purpose. The focus on teaching the basics is not sharp enough. There is little continuity in learning between one topic and the next in subjects beyond English and mathematics. It is not clear what pupils must understand and remember. Hence, there are gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Older pupils holding leadership roles do not really contribute to or make decisions about school life. Wider opportunities are somewhat limited. Pupils value the chance to represent their school at local sporting competitions, but they just wish that there were more ways to develop their skills and talents.

The small size of the school means that pupils all know each other. They generally behave well at social times. Pupils understand what it means to be a good friend and play amicably alongside each other. They enjoy making the most of the extensive grounds to run off energy at breaktimes.

Pupils are starting to benefit from recent changes. They are, rightly, confident that they can speak to any adult if they are worried about something and they will help them. There have been notable improvements in children's experiences in the early years. A firmer stance on attendance means that pupils have a better understanding of the importance of being in school regularly.

Next steps

- Those responsible for governance must urgently build leadership capacity within or by looking beyond the school so that the weaknesses in pupils' education and wellbeing are remedied swiftly and improvements are embedded.
- Those responsible for governance must build their collective knowledge and expertise so that they are able to meet their statutory duties and are better equipped to hold leaders to account for the quality of the school's work.

- Leaders should ensure that pupils' needs are identified precisely and in a timely manner and that staff are suitably skilled to shape and adapt learning activities to meet the needs of pupils in their class.
 - Leaders should ensure that there is a well-sequenced curriculum in all subjects and that staff have the expertise to teach it effectively so that pupils' achievement improves.
 - Leaders should ensure that there is a coherent and ambitious programme of personal development which all pupils benefit from so that they are well prepared for their future lives.
 - Leaders should work with parents and carers to sustain and build on recent improvements in attendance and punctuality so that pupils are in school regularly and on time and do not miss out on learning without good reason.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour in class and that they use rewards and consequences appropriately so that pupils' attitudes to their learning improve.
 - Leaders should ensure that the new early years curriculum is embedded so that children have the best start possible to their education.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Melissa Ashcombe.

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 the interim headteacher and interim special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, groups of staff and pupils during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair, the local authority and diocese.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. The last inspection of its religious character was in June 2023.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

There have been 4 different headteachers in the last year. Almost all teachers are very new to the school. Most pupils have had at least one change of class teacher this academic year. The organisation of the mixed-age classes was changed in January this year.

Interim headteacher : Dan Genn

Lead inspector:

Alison Bradley, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspector:

Elizabeth Jeanes, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

78

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

119

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)

10.26%

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

12.82%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.10%

Close to 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	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average

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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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	33%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	33%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	33%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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	33%	80%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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	33%	78%	-44 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	33%	80%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	10.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	5.9%	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 (2 term)	21.7%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	22.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	19.8%	16.2%	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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