

St Alban's Church of England Aided Primary School

Address: St Alban's Road, PO9 2JX

Unique reference number (URN): 116362

Inspection report: 13 January 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.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development programme is a well-constructed strength of the school. It is dynamic and responsive to the school's local context. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum reflects leaders' commitment to equipping pupils with essential knowledge for modern life, including being safe in their local area and purposeful relationships education. In this, the school understands its role in supporting families. The school acts as a community hub, working closely with external agencies and offering a wide range of home-school events that strengthen family engagement and community cohesion. Staff have received targeted training to support this, which has elevated the status of PSHE as a central part of pupils' learning.

Pupils consistently demonstrate the school's values in their behaviour and interactions. They behave with integrity, show respect towards peers and adults and articulate the fundamental British values confidently. Health education is threaded through the curriculum, enabling pupils to articulate clearly how to maintain both physical and emotional wellbeing. The school provides a wide range of effective and empowering pastoral support programmes, which help reduce pupils' barriers to learning. Pupils are effusive in talking about spirituality, particularly in relation to their experiences of nature and considering how they are feeling each day. All pupils benefit from this, and those who need more specific pastoral or therapeutic support articulate the difference the help the school gives them very well.

Leaders have a detailed understanding of pupils' disadvantages and vulnerabilities. From this, they coordinate provision systematically so these pupils can participate fully in school life. Additional funding is used strategically to ensure that these pupils are prioritised for enrichment opportunities. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils accessing wider opportunities is high and increasing. As a result, these pupils speak very positively about the increased confidence and sense of belonging these opportunities provide.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Overall, pupils learn well and are mostly ready for the next stage of learning. Children in early years make a secure start to their learning. This helps them to have many of the key skills they will need to help them as they go into Year 1. Pupils learn their phonics sounds well. This sets them up well to become fluent readers. Writing achievement could be strengthened further with a more rigorous approach to pupils learning their early writing skills. Results in national assessments throughout key stage 2 demonstrate that the pupils broadly meet national averages by the time they leave. Pupils with a disadvantage typically achieve as well as their relevant group nationally.

Vulnerable pupils achieve well because of strong relationships and well-targeted support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities take part fully in lessons and often show interest and confidence, especially in the wider curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that attendance is a high priority at the school. Overall attendance has increased year on year since the COVID-19 pandemic and is now close to pre-pandemic levels. Leaders know exactly which pupils are persistently absent and monitor their attendance every week. They use letters, inclusion meetings and supportive strategies, such as pastoral support, soft starts and 'Ready to Learn' sessions, to promote better attendance. These approaches have led to real improvements. For example, most pupils receiving more significant pastoral support now have attendance of over 95%.

Behaviour across the school is calm and respectful. Leaders have recently developed the behaviour procedures, and staff are enacting the expectations consistently across the school. Pupils are polite, welcoming and show good attitudes to learning. The vast majority of pupils want to learn and maintain the orderly atmosphere of the school. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are strong models for younger pupils. Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. These help pupils to learn from mistakes during reflective conversations. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and can often recognise what will happen before staff explain it. Bullying is exceptionally rare, as are discriminatory comments, and both are taken very seriously by staff when they do occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the content of the whole curriculum. Overall, the curriculum is well sequenced and meets the needs of the pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, at the school. It is typically taught effectively by teachers with secure subject knowledge. Pupils want to learn, and they appreciate teachers' efforts to make the learning interesting. In some subjects, such as history, the exact knowledge that teachers need to teach is very clear. However, in a few other subjects the key knowledge pupils need to learn is not taught with as much rigour and precision.

Teachers are skilled, particularly in mathematics and reading lessons, at checking pupils' learning. This means they can address errors quickly, and pupils learn more effectively. Leaders continue to prioritise early reading. Staff give extra help to those who need it, for example through small-group sessions and daily reading. Leaders are also working on further improving the writing curriculum. Pupils' early writing skills, such as correct pencil grip and handwriting, are mostly taught accurately. However, occasionally pupils' pencil grips or writing postures are not routinely corrected and staff do not always model correct letter formation. This leads to slower progress, which can hamper pupils' writing stamina in older years.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the curriculum in Reception is designed in response to the school's knowledge of the children and the school's context. As a result, there is a focus to address some children's limited access to outdoor space and weaker oracy skills. Staff in the Reception class work well with parents and carers, as well as external agencies when necessary, to support children effectively. Staff interactions with children are invariably positive and caring. These typically move learning on, but on occasions interactions with children, whether individually, in groups or as a class, do not extend children's thinking or deepen learning as effectively as they could.

Leaders ensure that children's early foundational knowledge and positive attitudes to learning are suitably developed. As a result, most children leave the early years ready for Year 1. In Reception, children learn the early reading of sounds well and develop a genuine interest in stories. Sometimes, however, staff do not always ensure that letters are formed precisely and consistently for children to copy and learn from. Furthermore, some of the writing tasks and resources provided for children to complete do not encourage high-quality early writing as effectively as they could.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff know pupils well and have a clear focus on supporting those who are most vulnerable. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and built on high expectations. Useful resources, such as visual prompts and wobble cushions, help pupils manage daily routines and take part in learning with more confidence. Classrooms are thoughtfully set up to meet individual needs. Staff regularly review what is working so their practice continues to improve. Leaders ensure that training is coordinated well so staff understand how to support pupils effectively. Assessment is used carefully to spot gaps and identify the right support for these pupils. Leaders use external experts' support well. This shows leaders' commitment to precision and effective coordination. Support arrangements are clear and measurable. Parents are grateful for the school's communication and involvement in reviewing the next steps.

Leaders also understand the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and pupils from service families. Targeted support, including pastoral support, sensory circuits and wider therapies, helps pupils with wider barriers to learning settle and make progress.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have significant ambition for continued improvement of the school. All stakeholders recognise the positive impact of recent developments, particularly in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. Leaders have a crystal-clear understanding of the school's key strengths and areas that need to develop further. Leaders ensure that these priorities closely relate to staff training and development. The confidence of the school's middle leaders is developing significantly. This is helping them to identify strengths and next steps in their area of responsibility. However, as many leaders are

relatively new to their roles, there is a need to embed this further to ensure that next steps are implemented and achieved.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They have guided the school through some leadership turbulence, providing vital support and challenge for the new senior leaders on their continued journey of school improvement. Governors engage purposefully in school life through visits and curriculum events. They use these to help monitor the quality of the school's provision. Their oversight of safeguarding, attendance and provision for vulnerable pupils is effective. Governors also take their duty to consider staff workload and wellbeing seriously. Consequently, staff are overwhelmingly positive and say they are proud to work at the school. They are grateful that leaders consider their opinions. Parents and carers are highly complimentary about the school and its leadership. As a result, the school community is supportive of the school's continued drive to make decisions in the best interests of pupils.

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

At St Alban's Primary School, pupils learn in an environment where they are safe, included and well cared for. Leaders have worked hard to create this supportive culture. The school's values of love, courage and fellowship come through clearly in how pupils behave and in their attitudes to learning. Pupils trust the staff. They learn how to stay safe online and in the community and know who they can talk to for help.

Pupils with vulnerabilities or pupils who are disadvantaged get the right help so they can join in with lessons and school life. The school understands pupils' individual needs and supports them well. For example, some pupils might receive 'calm start' sessions or emotional support, which helps the pupils to settle into the school day and learn. Pupils learn reading, writing and mathematics well. They love their 'learning quests' in the wider curriculum and talk excitedly about subjects such as history and geography. They remember a lot of what they have learned.

Pupils are polite, welcoming and well-mannered. They behave with a deep sense of right and wrong. As a result, bullying is very rare. When issues do occur, leaders deal with them and restore confidence among pupils and families. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They show maturity and act as role models for younger pupils. The school's wider personal development programme enriches pupils' experiences significantly. They are specifically taught how to look after their own mental and physical health very well, develop respectful relationships and understand fundamental British values. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, trips, community events and experiences linked to the local area. Disadvantaged pupils benefit considerably from this.

Overall, pupils thrive in a warm, ambitious and increasingly successful school. Pupils feel safe, valued and well supported to grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the writing curriculum is consistently high quality and taught well across all subjects and year groups, including in the early years.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently make effective decisions about what to teach in each subject, including in the early years.
 - Leaders at all levels should further develop their leadership skills so they can contribute effectively to improving the quality of provision across the school.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Christopher Tunncliffe.

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 met with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing board, a representative from the diocese and an educational representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's last Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was carried out in December 2025.

Since the last inspection most members of the School's Leadership Team are new to post. The current headteacher took up post in April 2024.

The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sarah Goldsworthy

Lead inspector:

Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jason Philipsz, Ofsted Inspector

Lea Hannam, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

220

Close to 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

222

Close to 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)

32.73%

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: 26.3%

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

3.18%

Close to 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

19.09%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	76%	61%	Above
2022/23	63%	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	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23	78%	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	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	76%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	69%	71%	Close to average

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	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	88%	73%	Above
2022/23	72%	73%	Close to average

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	54%	46%	Above
2024/25	30%	47%	Below
2023/24	77%	46%	Above
2022/23	50%	44%	Close to average

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	66%	62%	Close to average
2024/25	50%	63%	Below
2023/24	77%	62%	Above
2022/23	67%	60%	Close to average

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	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25	40%	59%	Below
2023/24	77%	58%	Above
2022/23	50%	58%	Close to average

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	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	85%	59%	Above
2022/23	50%	59%	Close to average

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	54%	68%	-13 pp
2024/25	30%	69%	-39 pp
2023/24	77%	67%	10 pp
2022/23	50%	66%	-16 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	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24	77%	80%	-3 pp
2022/23	67%	78%	-12 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	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25	40%	78%	-38 pp
2023/24	77%	78%	-1 pp
2022/23	50%	77%	-27 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	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24	85%	79%	5 pp
2022/23	50%	79%	-29 pp

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 terms)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	5.7%	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 terms)	9.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24	12.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	13.0%	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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