

Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School

Address: Farley Dell, BA3 5PN

Unique reference number (URN): 123747

Inspection report: 18 November 2025

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

Early years

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved the early years provision significantly. They have redesigned the early years curriculum. It is now ambitious for all children and ensures children get the support they need to thrive academically and personally.

Children benefit from a rich environment which is designed to excite their curiosity and support their development. Where most effective, the curriculum is language rich and designed to help close communication and language gaps. For example, children in Reception discuss and describe the features of minibeasts in the outdoor area. Staff purposefully introduce children to new vocabulary, which children then use accurately. By the end of Reception, most children achieve well.

Staff quickly identify barriers to learning and put appropriate support in place for children. The school has prioritised supporting children to develop a love of reading. Children in the provision for 2- and 3-year-olds are introduced to stories and rhymes. Staff use drama to help bring stories to life and to make reading fun. They model new words in their interactions with children. As children move into the Reception Year, they build on this and learn phonics, spelling and handwriting in a logical and sequenced way.

Staff work in partnership with parents and carers. This helps ensure a smooth transition when children move from Nursery to Reception, and from Reception to Year 1.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strength. The school offers a range of wider experiences that nurture pupils' talents and interests. Joining a rock band or the school choir, or attending clubs such as gardening or archery, are just a few of the activities that pupils enjoy during and after the school day. Leaders track participation, including for those who are disadvantaged, to ensure that opportunities are open to all.

Pupils learn about tolerance and mutual respect. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils develop understanding of Christianity and other faiths, including Judaism and Sikhism, and the importance of celebrations such as Diwali to different cultures. This helps pupils to consider a range of views on the wider world.

The personal, social and health education curriculum develops pupils' knowledge of online safety. For example, pupils understand both the dangers and the advantages that social media and the internet might bring to their lives. They know how to keep themselves physically healthy, and they can identify the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. The curriculum supports pupils to recognise how their bodies change as they get older.

Pupils learn to challenge stereotypes. They explore role models, such as inspirational female scientists, and know why it is important to embrace equality and diversity. Residential trips, outdoor learning and musical performances further enhance pupils' character development.

The school's houses, such as 'Goodeaves' and 'Coalbarton', remind pupils of the local community's rich mining heritage. Pupils relish leadership opportunities as sports captains and members of the collective worship team. Leaders are creative about their approach to fostering pupil voice. There is an active school council that is involved in decision-making, for example redesigning the playground or supporting local and national charities through fundraising. Through their actions and conduct, pupils demonstrate the fundamental British values. Members of the pupil wellbeing committee support other pupils with their resilience.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics. This is the legacy of a weak curriculum. These gaps hamper pupils' ability to learn the curriculum well and to achieve highly. This experience contrasts with pupils' achievement in the early years and key stage 1. Here, pupils largely secure the basic skills in reading and writing. They learn the number facts and mental arithmetic they need.

While leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well, some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not achieve as highly as they could.

In spite of this, most pupils achieve outcomes that are in line with or above national outcomes by the end of Year 6, in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check. In other subjects, for example science, pupils in Year 3 understand how to use fossils to observe how living species have evolved. Pupils link this learning to possible future careers as palaeontologists.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

The school has high expectations for pupils to attend regularly. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to break down the barriers that make it difficult for some pupils to attend school. Although most pupils attend well and persistent absence is reducing, leaders do not routinely analyse attendance information closely enough, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Until very recently, leaders did not identify trends and patterns to identify where extra support is needed. Therefore, the full impact of this work on pupils' attendance is not evident.

The school teaches pupils the importance of politeness and good conduct. Pupils are routinely well mannered and respectful. From the moment children join the school, they settle quickly because of established routines. They know what is expected of them. Pupils follow the school rules of 'be kind, safe and responsible'. Typically, they enjoy learning and behave well in the classroom. In the playground, pupils play well together, showing kindness and respect. Pupils trust staff to act on any concerns about bullying, though they feel safe and are clear that bullying is uncommon.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There is a legacy of a weak curriculum across the school. Consequently, there is more to do to close the gaps older pupils have in basic skills such as handwriting, punctuation and spelling. Furthermore, at times, the school does not deploy staff or allocate resources well enough. This means that some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not consistently receive the help they need to catch up quickly.

Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened the curriculum. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the curriculum and teaching. Typically, staff use their subject knowledge to teach confidently. Pupils benefit from a range of readily available resources, such as writing frames and practical objects to support mathematics. Younger pupils develop fluency in reading and number facts. Consequently, pupils are well prepared as they move into key stage 2. Leaders have set out the important information they want pupils to learn and when pupils should learn it. In some subjects, pupils build their knowledge well over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 6 solve problems, make comparisons and reason. This helps them get ready for the move to secondary school.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders do not monitor the impact of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) closely enough. As a result, they do not have a clear view of how well pupils with SEND learn. This means leaders do not provide the guidance staff need to match provision to pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Staff benefit from training on how to support pupils to learn key knowledge. For example, staff extend pupils' understanding through modelling and questioning. However, the support that some pupils with SEND receive is varied. The targets in pupils' individual learning plans lack precision. Leaders do not review these targets with sufficient rigour. Gaps in pupils' learning remain and do not close quickly enough. This prevents pupils from developing the knowledge that they need to succeed.

Despite this, an inclusive culture exists at the school. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are fully included in the many opportunities provided to enhance learning. Leaders work with external agencies to help identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The school engages well with families to support pupils' wellbeing and mental health.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

While leaders understand what needs to be done, there are areas of the school's work in need of development. In some areas, developments are recent and the impact on pupils is not evident. Areas of the school need attention to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), succeed from their starting points. Some actions lack precision or do not identify the underlying causes of any weakness for some groups of pupils. Therefore, they do not lead to improvement quickly enough. Governors are supportive of the school. They understand their broad roles and

responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties, for example they monitor safeguarding closely. However, governors do not provide enough challenge for the quality of education the school provides, particularly in the way leaders support pupils with SEND.

There is a commitment from leaders to raise standards of education to support all pupils to achieve well. In recent years, the school has improved the provision in the early years, pupils' behaviour and the offer for personal development and wellbeing. Overall, staff feel valued and supported in their roles. They appreciate the support leaders provide to help them manage their workload and say that the school has a 'family feel'. The school continues to improve its relationships with parents and carers. Many parents value how staff 'go above and beyond' to ensure their children are happy and safe.

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

Warm and caring relationships form the bedrock of this school. Staff provide high-quality pastoral care. This helps pupils feel well cared for. Older pupils nurture their younger peers. The school's caring ethos begins in the early years, where children get off to a positive start to their schooling. Across the school, pupils feel safe and happy. Most pupils attend regularly and behave well. If bullying occurs, pupils know staff will deal with it.

Pupils live out the school values of 'courage, compassion and creativity'. Through regular assemblies, pupils learn about and reflect on life in modern Britain and further afield. Events that bring the school community together, such as 'Victory in Europe Day', help pupils build relationships with different generations. Art exhibitions and parents' and carers' coffee mornings celebrate pupils' achievements and help foster a sense of belonging.

Children in Nursery and Reception build secure foundations in their learning and development, such as knowledge of early reading, writing and numbers. As pupils move into key stage 1, they learn from a curriculum that builds on these foundations.

Pupils typically achieve well by the end of key stage 2. However, aspects of the curriculum and teaching remain underdeveloped. Too many older pupils do not secure the key basic skills they need to thrive academically, such as using full stops and forming and joining letters accurately.

Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn as well as they should. Leaders, including governors, do not check the quality of education for pupils with SEND with enough rigour. Typically, some pupils with individual support plans have targets that lack precision. This means some pupils do not receive the clear support they need to learn as well as they should.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their strategic oversight of how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn so they can take appropriate action to reduce pupils' barriers to learning and improve their achievement.
 - The school should ensure that it gives sufficient focus, as early as possible, to the basic writing skills and knowledge pupils need to be able to write with greater fluency and accuracy, particularly those in key stage 2 who have gaps in their learning.
 - Leaders should analyse attendance data, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to identify patterns and barriers, so they can intervene early to improve attendance.
 - Governors should ensure they develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to hold leaders to account more effectively for the quality of education pupils receive.
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About this inspection

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 headteacher, senior teachers, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a group of staff. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in March 2020. The next inspection is due within 5 years from this date.

Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school has pre-school provision for 2-year-olds.

Headteacher: Chris Lane

Lead inspector:

Gavin Summerfield, His Majesty's Inspector

Team 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 18 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

131

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

164

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)

27.78%

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

2.29%

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

13.74%

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

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 maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	54%	61%	Below
2024/25	75%	62%	Above
2023/24	50%	61%	Below
2022/23	42%	60%	Below

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	68%	74%	Below
2024/25	88%	75%	Above
2023/24	68%	74%	Below
2022/23	53%	73%	Below

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	79%	72%	Above
2024/25	88%	72%	Above
2023/24	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	79%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	73%	Below
2024/25	81%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	57%	73%	Below
2022/23	58%	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	29%	46%	Below
2022/23	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	59%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	43%	62%	Below
2022/23	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	76%	59%	Above
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24	43%	59%	Below
2022/23	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24	29%	67%	-39 pp
2022/23	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	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	43%	80%	-37 pp
2022/23	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	76%	78%	-1 pp
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	57%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	59%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	43%	79%	-37 pp
2022/23	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 (1 term)	5.5%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	6.0%	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 (1 term)	16.7%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	16.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	17.9%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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