

St Sampson's Church of England Primary School

Address: Bath Road, Cricklade, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 6AX

Unique reference number (URN): 126317

Inspection report: 24 February 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders are tenacious in addressing any poor attendance or punctuality. Staff ensure pupils and their families receive consistent communication about the importance of attending school. Staff have had training to ensure pupils have individualised approaches to help them to improve their attendance. Leaders model these strategies effectively, for example through being highly visible leaders. As a result, pupils' attendance has increased notably in recent years. Persistent absence, particularly among those pupils with barriers to their learning, has greatly reduced. Of note is how leaders work successfully in partnership with families and external agencies to secure regular attendance.

Pupils engage with their learning with the utmost enthusiasm. They develop highly respectful and sensible behaviours. Those who may struggle to manage their emotions at times are supported by caring staff who apply the school's 'super six' behaviour expectations fairly. Pupils are clear that discrimination is wrong and that it would be addressed if it did happen. The school is a calm environment to learn in. This extends to social times, where pupils care for one another and engage in imaginative play. Older pupils have several leadership roles. Within these roles, they act as role models to younger pupils. For example, play leaders organise games, support younger pupils with their play and plan which new equipment the school will purchase.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school has designed an enriching programme to develop pupils beyond the academic. As part of this, pupils learn a suitable relationships and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships. They have a firm grasp about how to keep safe in the wider world, including road safety. They learn about online risks, such as clickbait and viruses.

Pupils thoughtfully engage with current affairs in the wider world. They reflect on ethical issues and values. Because of this, pupils develop deep empathy for people across the globe. Pupils talk animatedly about beliefs that different people may hold and how they may show respect to religious figures and traditions. For example, they compare and contrast items of clothing relating to different religions and the deeper meaning behind why people fast.

Pupils develop a profound appreciation for cultural diversity and heritage. Through trips to the theatre, pupils develop their knowledge of the arts. Visits to places of interest such as Stonehenge strengthen pupils' learning about history. Pupils develop their love for music and learn about different cultures, for example through steel drums sessions.

The school's work to develop pupils' character is highly effective. Pupils have 'leading lights' roles in which they make valued contributions to school life. For example, pupils take an active role in the community where they see the impact they can have on others. As an example, they serve lunches to the elderly. They work with the local foodbank, learning to be charitable and to support those less fortunate.

In addition, the school ensures pupils fully participate in clubs, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils are invited to have a say in the school's enrichment offer and share their views. This enhances their understanding of democracy and its importance in school and wider society. Consequently, pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils progress successfully through the curriculum. They learn the curriculum and build new knowledge based on prior learning. For example, pupils use their knowledge of colour mixing to create observational paintings of the local church. The curriculum is designed with a strong emphasis on language and communication. This enables pupils to talk about their learning confidently.

Generally, pupils achieve well in national tests and examinations. Although this is so, there are times when disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as they could. However, they make suitable progress from their starting points, which is not always portrayed in published outcomes. Leaders prioritise the learning of the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables pupils to be well equipped for future learning. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a thorough understanding of how well the curriculum is taught across the school. They have ensured that the school's priorities are informed through their checks on the curriculum and its impact. For example, leaders ensure that pupils' knowledge of the basics is prioritised within the curriculum. Leaders have constructed a carefully designed and broad curriculum that identifies the knowledge which pupils need at each stage of their education and in all subjects at St Sampson's. This curriculum prepares pupils for their next stage well.

The school has a considered programme to develop teachers professionally. Consequently, staff have the required skill set and knowledge to be able to teach the curriculum well across subjects. This includes ensuring staff have the expertise to be able to adapt teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have other barriers to their learning.

Typically, pupils are taught the basics in reading, writing and mathematics effectively. The school has a clear system to teach handwriting. However, on some occasions, teachers do not identify and address misconceptions, particularly in pupils' written work. This means that some pupils make repeated errors in their handwriting and letter formation.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years is a priority for the school. Parents and carers are complimentary about the support provided to children and their families when they begin school, which enables a successful start. Children quickly grasp the rules and routines of the early years. Because of this, no time is lost and children make an immediate start to their learning. Children sustain their attention through carefully planned activities that enable pupils to develop their knowledge.

Leaders have constructed a well planned and sequenced curriculum that takes into account the needs of children in each cohort. For example, they have prioritised children's communication and language development. Leaders ensure that staff interactions with children are high quality and purposeful. As part of this, staff carefully ensure that children's speech is swiftly supported if they mispronounce sounds.

Reading is central to the early years curriculum, with pupils learning how to read daily through the school's chosen phonics scheme. Children read books that match the sounds they know. They learn to segment and blend words to read and write words and sentences with accuracy. Children learn how to sit properly to write, and teachers carefully spot and address any errors so that these do not become embedded. As a result, children are ready for their next stage of learning in Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and effectively from early years. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with barriers to their learning. Staff get to know pupils and their needs through effective partnerships with prior settings. They put in place strategies to enable pupils to learn well and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. For example, some pupils get additional reading support and personalised help to enable them to attend school.

Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress regularly. They check the impact of strategies put in place to support pupils to achieve well. They make adaptations and modifications if pupils with SEND are not meeting their targets. This means these pupils make sound progress from their starting points. Staff receive ample training on how to support pupils with SEND and those with other barriers to their learning. Leaders engage with several external agencies, including the local authority, in order to enhance support for pupils. For example, the school's work to support Traveller children is noteworthy and is shared with the local authority.

Pupils in receipt of additional funding are supported effectively. For example, the use of the pupil premium is impactful, tracked and monitored to ensure these pupils learn well from the curriculum and benefit from the school's wide enrichment offer.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance have ambitious expectations for all pupils. Leaders are acutely aware of the school's strengths and areas they continue to refine. They

have used published outcomes, analysis and their understanding of pupils' learning to create their priorities for improvement. These priorities inform the professional learning programme for staff to build their skills, for example ensuring staff understand how to better write support plans and targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff feel supported to work at St Sampson's. They feel their ideas are listened to and that their wellbeing and workload are considered prior to the launch of any new initiatives. This extends to any staff who are new to the school, or to teaching, who get training and support to extend their expertise.

Governors meet their statutory duties well. They ensure there is a clear vision for the school centred on 'lighting up life and learning'. Governors hold leaders to account through effective challenge, particularly about the curriculum and its impact. They ensure resources are managed effectively, in the best interests of children, including those with SEND and those who face other barriers to their learning, to enable pupils to achieve well. Parents and carers are appreciative of the work of the school and the support for their children.

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

Pupils thrive at St Sampson's. Their improving attendance is due to the way in which the school cultivates a strong sense of belonging. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school reduces or removes barriers for pupils to ensure their full participation in the school's wider offer. Compassionate staff develop warm relationships so that pupils feel safe to talk about any worries. Pupils are confident that staff will help to resolve any issues.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They rise to the high expectations of behaviour that staff have for them. Children in the early years quickly learn the routines of school. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils throughout school life, including at social times. Pupils say that if bullying happens, staff deal with it effectively.

Typically, pupils learn the curriculum well and achieve in line with national expectations or make suitable progress from their starting points. This includes pupils who have barriers to their learning, who benefit from the school's work to address these. Consequently, most pupils are ready for secondary school.

Pupils have a meaningful say in school life. They become positive members of the school community through many thoughtfully considered leadership roles. Pupils develop a deep understanding of individual liberty. They are given independence and influence the school, such as through organising their own clubs, including the ordering of equipment. 'Guinea pig gurus' and construction club are just some of the pupils' favourites. Pupils also make a marked contribution to supporting others in their learning. For example, 'reading ambassadors' help younger pupils improve their reading skills and develop a love for reading. Pupils develop the skills and confidence which help to prepare them for life beyond St Sampson's.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address misconceptions so that pupils do not make repeated errors, particularly in their writing.
 - Leaders should continue, and further strengthen, their work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need to attain as highly as possible in reading, writing and mathematics.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Julian Thomas.

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, deputy headteachers and a group of staff. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.

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 considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

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 Bristol. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in July 2024.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jennifer Bayne

Lead inspector:

Lakmini Harkus, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah O'Donnell, Ofsted Inspector

Sara Arkle, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

285

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

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

15.09%

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

3.51%

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

19.30%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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 (revised)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	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	76%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	19%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	13%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	13%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30%	44%	Below

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	69%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	38%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	88%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40%	58%	Below

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	38%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	25%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	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	19%	68%	-48 pp
2024/25 (revised)	13%	69%	-57 pp
2023/24 (final)	13%	67%	-55 pp
2022/23 (final)	30%	66%	-36 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	69%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	88%	80%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	80%	78%	2 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	42%	78%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	78%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	77%	-37 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	38%	80%	-41 pp
2024/25 (revised)	25%	81%	-56 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	79%	-42 pp
2022/23 (final)	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 term)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	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)	11.0%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.5%	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.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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