

Coombe Bissett Church of England Primary School

Address: Shutts Lane, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4LU

Unique reference number (URN): 126382

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

Early years

Strong standard 

The early years is a hive of busy and exciting learning. Children display high levels of curiosity and creativity across the well-designed curriculum. During 'discovery time', they use binoculars to spot birds, experiment with ice and use maracas to make music. These, and other opportunities, create joyful moments full of awe and wonder.

Staff make every moment a learning opportunity. For example, climbing trees and balancing build children's core strength. Staff use a diverse range of stories to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Through phonics, staff guide children expertly to read and write simple sentences with growing confidence. Children explore number pairs to 5 and enthusiastically sing rhymes to deepen their mathematical understanding.

At snack time, staff model high-quality conversations and support children with their expressive language and social skills. In turn, children show impressive levels of independence, such as peeling fruit and taking turns.

Excellent partnerships exist between the school and families. Staff invite parents and carers into school and provide learning videos to help them best support their children at home. Children make sustained progress because staff adapt the curriculum precisely to meet individual needs. They are very well prepared for the move to Year 1.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

The school places significant focus on securing the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics from the early years onwards. This approach works well. Most pupils acquire the knowledge they need to read with confidence and calculate accurately. Pupils who struggle receive effective support to help them catch up. Most pupils achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Recent work on identifying key subject content to be taught helps pupils to connect and recall their learning across subjects. For example, pupils can confidently explain the significance of historical figures, such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and describe the properties and uses of different materials in science. However, at times, teaching in the wider curriculum does not consistently support pupils to produce high-quality written work. This limits how well some pupils can demonstrate their understanding.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school fosters a strong sense of belonging, which encourages pupils to attend regularly. Leaders support and challenge families when tackling any attendance concerns. For example, the school provides appropriate support, such as wraparound care, to improve

individual attendance. This proactive work with parents and carers is making a real difference. As a result, overall attendance has improved and is in line with national expectations.

Pupils generally display mature attitudes and uphold the school's rules and high expectations. From the early years onwards, pupils settle quickly to tasks and respond promptly to adult instructions. Across the school, including at breakfast club and during social times, pupils are polite, share and take turns. They look out for each other and delight in showing care and support to make their school a happy and friendly place to learn. Pupils especially enjoy receiving house point tokens in recognition of their achievements. Older pupils describe how this inspires them to 'work and think hard'. Unkind behaviour is uncommon. When fallouts do happen, staff use a calm, restorative approach that helps pupils to understand the impact of their actions and improves behaviour over time.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and the school's teaching priorities. This insight has informed their work to strengthen aspects such as handwriting, spelling and staff training. Teachers are increasingly confident in teaching important early skills such as pencil grip and letter formation. The impact of this is evident in the improved quality of pupils' English work, especially the impressive writing in the early years.

The school organises its wider curriculum through an enquiry-based approach. It identifies key questions, essential knowledge and the vocabulary pupils need to understand. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. Visits and hands-on experiences bring learning to life. For example, a trip to the planetarium deepens pupils' understanding of the solar system.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge to teach the curriculum. They draw on a range of effective approaches, including weaving important vocabulary into lessons and conversations with pupils. Staff typically explain and model new learning effectively, including reading aloud with fluency and expression. They also use resources well, such as images and examples, to help pupils understand mathematical concepts. Although teaching is typically effective, some activities in the wider curriculum are not well suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and teachers display a high level of commitment to the needs of pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Effective processes help staff to notice early when a pupil is struggling. Staff make sensible changes in lessons to enable pupils to keep up, such as pre-teaching important content.

Where appropriate, leaders bring in outside specialists so that pupils with SEND get the right support. For example, the school selects bespoke alternative learning programmes to help pupils with their social and communication skills.

Across the school, teachers work closely with parents and carers to agree on and review any individual support that pupils receive. Staff develop individual plans and set specific targets for pupils with SEND. They check these plans regularly and use what they learn to adjust their teaching. However, at times, leaders are aware that some targets are too broad and do not pinpoint exactly what pupils need to be able to do.

Caring relationships help pupils feel included and achieve well from their starting points. The school uses additional funding wisely to remove barriers to learning. It ensures that no pupils miss out on the wide range of activities on offer.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has worked with energy and determination to remedy the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Central to this has been stable leadership following periods of instability. Leaders demonstrate a clear determination for all pupils to succeed, as reflected in the increased expectations across the school, notably in the early years, where children excel. Leaders, with support from the local authority, know precisely what works well and recognise what still needs to improve. They are well placed to do so.

Staff buy into every aspect of the school's vision. They are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school and have embraced the opportunities to improve the curriculum and hone their practice. They speak highly of the consideration leaders give to their workload and wellbeing.

Governors have secure oversight of the school's work. They visit the school and ask the right questions to understand the school's strengths and priorities. For example, they check on safeguarding arrangements and the impact of the enquiry-based curriculum. Governors monitor how the school uses its funding to ensure that it has the best possible impact on disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Most parents and carers speak highly of the school. They describe it as a 'special' place where children 'shine' in all they do. Parents feel part of the community and enjoy attending the weekly celebration assembly.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a thoughtfully designed personal development programme. They can explain what makes a healthy relationship, including respect, honesty and personal boundaries. Pupils know how to stay safe online by using the 'four Cs', such as thinking about 'content' and their 'conduct'. Older pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of consent.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about difference and diversity through carefully chosen books, resources and experiences. Pupils speak confidently about the importance of treating everyone with respect and not judging others by the way they look. They learn 'to love and treat everyone the same', in line with the school's ethos.

Pupils learn effective strategies to support their mental health and wellbeing. The use of 'emotion stones' in each classroom encourages meaningful discussions about feelings.

Through the curriculum, the school raises pupils' aspirations. For example, older pupils get the chance to learn about future careers such as becoming a vet or an engineer.

From an early age, pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, trips and enrichment activities. Visits to places of worship, such as a church and a gurdwara, help them to appreciate differences and understand cultures. Pupils learn about the fundamental British values through mock elections and various voting opportunities on school issues.

Pupils are keen to take on important roles of responsibility. These include being house captains and school councillors. The school nurtures pupils' talents and interests through clubs such as LEGO, art, choir, homework and ukulele. Leaders monitor who takes part so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can access these opportunities.

Pupils contribute to their community by helping at a food bank, cleaning the church and visiting the local nature reserve. These experiences, and more, help them grow into confident, responsible and active citizens.

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

The school's vision for pupils to 'soar on wings like eagles' shines through in many aspects of school life. Pupils aim high, show positive attitudes and try their best. They uphold the core values, such as care and commitment. For example, they know the importance of not giving up when learning is hard. As a result, the school day runs smoothly, and bullying is rare.

The success of this small school hinges on the caring relationship between staff and pupils. Warm greetings from staff at the start of each day reinforce pupils' sense of belonging and safety. It also contributes to the calm atmosphere around the school. Staff get to know pupils well, which means they spot quickly if anyone needs extra help, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They can attend 'talk time', use a worry box or spend time with Peanut, the wellbeing dog. These opportunities help to reduce pupils' barriers to learning and make them feel valued and understood for who they are.

The school has achieved a great deal since the previous inspection. Much of this is due to the improved curriculum and higher expectations for pupils' academic learning. Pupils ask thoughtful and probing questions about their learning. They develop a keen sense of enquiry. This is especially notable in the early years, where children thrive as curious and inquisitive learners.

Leaders thread aspects of the personal development offer beyond the classroom. Pupils take pride in leadership roles, such as leading assemblies about their cultures. They learn to be active and responsible citizens through fundraising for animal charities and by applying their learning in real-life situations, such as visiting the village shop. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching in the wider curriculum consistently supports pupils to achieve the intended learning so that they deepen their knowledge and produce high-quality work.
 - Leaders should continue refining the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that individual targets are precise and consistently well matched to pupils' needs.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Trudy Nazer.

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 leaders and other school staff during the inspection, including the special educational needs coordinator.

The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Salisbury. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in December 2023.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2023.

The school makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Emma Haworth

Lead inspector:

Dale Burr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Deborah Wring, 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

99

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)

20.20%

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

2.02%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.13%

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

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	67%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	80%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	27%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
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	25%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	42%	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	36%	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	27%	68%	-40 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	25%	80%	-55 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	42%	78%	-36 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	36%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	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)	11.5%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	19.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.9%	16.2%	Below

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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