

St George's Foundation Primary School

Address: Clarence Road, Portland, Dorset, DT5 2BD

Unique reference number (URN): 127133

Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' attendance appropriately and check patterns and trends closely. They develop positive relationships with families and pupils. This enables leaders to identify and overcome any barriers to attendance that exist. For example, leaders make sure pupils who need it the most have spaces in the breakfast club. These approaches are typically helping to improve attendance overall. There are also examples of improved attendance for specific groups of pupils. Nevertheless, leaders rightly recognise their work needs more time to embed for some, particularly for those who are the most vulnerable.

St George's is calm and purposeful. Pupils generally behave well. There are clear routines that pupils know and follow. Pupils adhere to the school's values of 'inspire, believe and achieve'. Pupils show respectful attitudes, which enable them to transition smoothly between activities and help ensure bullying is rare. Low-level disruption is rare. If it does occur, staff deal with it effectively. Most pupils engage keenly with their work. At break and lunchtimes, pupils play together beautifully. Younger pupils look up to older pupils who organise fun activities for them. Pupils are rightly confident that staff deal quickly with any playground issues that arise.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that there is an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. They have focused on the right priorities to improve the delivery of the curriculum. Recent improvements to teaching mean that the curriculum develops pupils' early skills in reading, writing and mathematics appropriately. Staff rightly focus on letter and number formation; however, letter positioning is more varied. These improvements mean the curriculum is helping current pupils secure knowledge with greater success than in the past. As a result, published outcomes do not fully reflect the effectiveness of the curriculum and its delivery.

Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Pupils enjoy the relevance of the curriculum to where they live. They are proud to have famous landmarks near their school, which staff use to bring their learning to life. Leaders provide staff with the professional learning they need to teach phonics and early reading effectively. Staff deliver focused phonics lessons, supporting pupils' understanding of early reading. Staff respond swiftly to any gaps in pupils' learning and address them effectively within lessons.

Staff understand pupils' varying needs. They consider carefully the adaptations that help vulnerable pupils to learn new knowledge incrementally. Staff check pupils' learning diligently and regularly. They use this to identify any pupils falling behind to ensure they get the help to catch up quickly.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a secure start in the Reception Year. Routines are quickly established, helping children to settle as soon as they arrive. Staff work effectively with parents and

carers and with any pre-school settings that children attend. The early years curriculum makes clear the important knowledge that children need to learn. It is designed to address any gaps in children's knowledge, with a particular focus on supporting children's speech and language.

Generally, staff teach the curriculum well. Staff use their expertise to choose resources that engage children in purposeful play. They model new words and phrases carefully and ask probing questions to extend children's understanding. Leaders ensure that children develop their social skills and curiosity effectively. For example, children locate resources themselves, such as using spades and watering cans to explore the insects in the forest area with their friends.

Early reading is a priority. Staff have a secure knowledge of the school's phonics programme. During phonics sessions, staff introduce and model new sounds accurately. Staff address any gaps in children's phonics knowledge quickly. As a result, children in the early stages of reading develop confidence and fluency. The basic foundations of reading, writing and mathematics are carefully considered. Adaptations to learning support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn successfully alongside their peers. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year, most children are ready for their move into Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders use additional funding to address the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face effectively. They act quickly, including through useful engagement with external agencies, to identify need and enhance the education that disadvantaged pupils receive. For example, leaders use well-structured systems to measure their impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning. Carefully tailored pastoral support enables these pupils to participate fully in school life. This ensures disadvantaged pupils feel valued and can take an active role in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have suitable expertise to accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They routinely work with families and utilise external support well. This helps the school to put in place clear plans that address the barriers to learning that are identified. Pupils with SEND benefit from precise individual targets, which are reviewed in a timely manner. When pupils face barriers to learning that require additional support beyond the classroom, a range of adaptations are used to meet their needs. For example, pupils are supported to learn in an individualised way in the 'Ammonite' room. As a result, staff ensure pupils with SEND receive targeted support that enables them to learn the curriculum successfully.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has been through a recent period of turbulence. Despite this, leaders have set high expectations, while maintaining a strong sense of community. They know pupils and their families well and build positive relationships. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, including the local authority. They also collaborate closely with local schools within the 'Chesil Collaboration'. This provides leaders with additional capacity and support for

school improvement. Leaders understand the school's strengths and where further work is needed to improve.

Leaders make decisions with pupils' best interests at heart. An example of this is the 'Ammonite room', which helps foster a sense of belonging for the school's most vulnerable pupils. Any hurdles to learning have been negotiated carefully by leaders. They determinedly look to ensure that pupils can learn appropriately from their starting points, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders plan precise, valued professional development for staff. Together with governors, leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and workload. Staff feel supported and proud to work at the school. School governors are dedicated to the development of the school. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Governors use their expertise to provide appropriate support and challenge. For example, they challenge leaders rigorously on published outcomes, so that aspirations remain high. Parents and carers are typically very supportive of the school. They are grateful for recent school improvements that benefit their children. For example, several parents are rightly positive about how leaders respond to concerns with a positive, caring attitude.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured there is a well-organised personal development programme that meets the needs of all pupils. The personal, social and health education curriculum, including relationships, sex and health education, is delivered in an age-appropriate way. Pupils learn about staying safe, online and offline, and have a detailed understanding of different relationships. Useful school routines promote fundamental British values well. For example, pupils vote for their school council representatives. Pupils rightly recognise they are treated as equals, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or religion.

Leaders consider the school's heritage carefully to ensure it is woven throughout the curriculum. For example, the school's 'big history project' brings local stories to life. Pupils speak confidently about their locality, such as Chesil Beach, the Viking landings near the school and the stone from Portland that was used to build churches around Britain.

The school promotes pupils' moral and cultural development very well. For example, leaders are rightly proud of the impact of the school's community citizenship award. Useful and targeted assemblies include important lessons and information, often provided by external speakers such as the NSPCC or the local police. Pupils support local and national charities, embedding the values of 'inspire, believe and achieve', such as sponsoring a school in Kenya. The school's pastoral team provides caring, effective support for pupils when it is needed.

The school's extra-curricular offer is comprehensive. Leaders ensure that pupils can develop their talents and interests. Pupils attend activities after school, such as science club and drama club. The 'rock and pop' choir club is one that pupils speak very positively about. They enjoy singing popular songs together. Leaders ensure that pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged benefit equally from all these opportunities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Published outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 were below national expectations in 2025. In the past, pupils have not secured the important knowledge they need in English and mathematics to prepare them well for secondary school, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders' recent actions to improve pupils' learning are yet to be reflected consistently in published outcomes. Similarly, learning tasks that staff provide pupils are occasionally not well matched to pupils' needs, which can inhibit progress. This is particularly the case for pupils in key stage 1.

Pupils make sound progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics. They typically recall the important knowledge they learn. Overall, disadvantaged pupils are learning the curriculum with greater success. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically make positive progress from their starting points. Staff understand their needs appropriately in order to help them achieve well.

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

Pupils enjoy attending St George's Foundation Primary School. From the moment pupils arrive at school each day, staff ensure that pupils feel like they belong. Staff greet families warmly each morning, creating a calm and orderly start to the day. Morning activities, such as quiet reading and handwriting practice, set familiar expectations to help pupils settle quickly. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils typically behave well. They are keen to follow the school's mantra of 'inspire, believe, achieve'. Beyond this, pupils aspire to be 'ready, respectful and responsible'. This helps develop pupils' positive attitudes. Bullying is uncommon. If it does happen, pupils rightly trust staff to deal with it promptly and fairly.

The school is proud of its heritage. Throughout the curriculum, leaders ensure that pupils celebrate the school's rich history. Pupils learn about local landmarks, such as the famous lighthouse, 'Portland Bill'. Pupils also learn about life beyond school by going on trips to London and visiting national museums. This all helps to develop pupils' knowledge and widen their experiences.

The school has high ambitions for its pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite this, pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should. Leaders are acting quickly to address this.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Where this is not the case, improvements are already evident. Pupils enjoy roles such as school council, eco council and sports leaders. These opportunities help pupils to thrive and contribute positively to school life. Pupils learn to take responsibility in different ways by working with local organisations to focus on sustainability. Links to the local community such as the local church and local charities prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their new approach to developing pupils' writing skills is implemented consistently well, so that pupils' writing fluency improves the quality of their work across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff provide pupils with learning activities that consistently match their needs so that pupils achieve as highly as possible across all subjects.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lisa Vbranch-Wellman.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2024, creating a new leadership structure, including a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers in 2025.

Headteacher: Michael Coombs

Lead inspector:

Thomas Brewer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Neil Swait, Ofsted Inspector

Phil Minns, Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Williamson, 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

443

Well above 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

503

Well 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)

26.19%

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

4.97%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

25.28%

Well 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	51%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	46%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Above

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	68%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	19%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	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	62%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	45%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	32%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	58%	Above

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	58%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	52%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	76%	59%	Above

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	35%	68%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	19%	69%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	66%	-10 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	62%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	45%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	80%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	84%	78%	6 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	51%	78%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	32%	78%	-46 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	77%	-1 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	58%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	52%	81%	-29 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	79%	-35 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	76%	79%	-3 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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.2%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.4%	16.2%	Above

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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