

St Bartholomew's School

Address: Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6JP

Unique reference number (URN): 137465

Inspection report: 20 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion is at the heart of St Bartholomew's school. Leaders ensure that meeting the needs of pupils and addressing any barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing that they may face are priorities.

The school identifies barriers for learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Pupils are well supported through effective strategies that leaders put in place. Staff receive the training they need to make appropriate adaptations to learning. This ensures that barriers to learning are removed and enables pupils to achieve well across the school, both academically and more widely. There is a robust system in place to review pupils' progress and to make sure that pupils receive the support they need.

The school engages effectively with families. Leaders proactively seek external support and advice. This enhances the provision in school. The school also works together with the local authority to secure the best outcomes for children in care.

The school uses additional funding well. Leaders use evidence to inform practice and to ensure suitable support for disadvantaged pupils. This leads to positive experiences for these pupils across the school. The school uses alternative provision, appropriately and where needed, to re-engage pupils with education.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to succeed. Their vision to be a fully inclusive school that supports pupils to achieve their potential drives their work. Staff embrace this vision and aim to improve the life chances of every pupil, no matter their challenges.

Statutory duties are fulfilled at all levels by leaders, including the governing body. They have a combined understanding of the vision of the school, its moral purpose and how this can be achieved. Leaders are self-reflective. They identify the school's strengths and where they want to improve further. Where they need to take action they do so quickly. This has a clear impact on improving the education of all pupils in the school. Governors understand the school well and challenge school leaders appropriately.

The professional learning of staff is prioritised and tailored to the needs of staff. It is linked directly to the vision of the school to promote an inclusive culture. This brings about rapid improvements in teaching and learning. Staff appreciate the dedication to their professional development. This results in a culture where staff are able to thrive.

Workload is a priority for leaders. They take action to ensure that staff wellbeing and workload are considered in their decision-making. As a result, staff feel well supported.

Leaders have developed a well-considered and ambitious personal development programme. Staff are trained to deliver it effectively. It meets the needs of pupils, including the most vulnerable. The wide range of opportunities in the curriculum and beyond enable pupils to learn more about the world and themselves. This means that they are prepared for life beyond school and become positive members of society.

Pupils reflect on their beliefs. They have the opportunity to debate ideas and to challenge each other. Pupils develop age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values. They understand the characteristics that are protected by law and are able to discuss them. Pupils understand why equality and respect are important.

Pastoral support is of a high quality. Leaders identify pupils' needs and have effective systems in place to provide the right support. This ranges from internal check-ins with house leaders or teaching staff, to more focused external support from specialist agencies. Pupils know how to keep safe and learn how to manage risks, both online and offline.

The impressive careers programme ensures that pupils are prepared for their next stages. A high number of pupils stay in education, employment or training. The school ensures that additional bespoke support is in place for the most vulnerable pupils.

Enrichment is at the heart of the school. There is an impressive uptake in the school's enrichment programme. Leaders remove any barriers for pupils to attend and proactively support them to engage. Trips locally and further afield support pupils to get a wider view of the world. Pupils have a range of leadership opportunities which have a positive impact on their lives in school. This helps pupils to feel listened to. For example, pupils appreciate how the school has responded to their ideas and implemented change, including more parking for the sixth-form students and clocks in classrooms.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils learn the curriculum well. Written work across the school for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is of a high standard. At key stage 4, overall, pupils' progress and attainment are above national averages. This includes the high number of pupils with SEND. Leaders have removed the barriers for the most vulnerable. They ensure that they achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils in the sixth form typically achieve broadly in line with national averages, including those with SEND. However, there are a small number of vocational subjects where pupils do not achieve as well. Pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

There is effective support in place for those who are not yet confident readers. Intervention to support those at the early stages of English and mathematics is effective.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders promote high attendance across the school. There are effective systems in place to identify where a pupils' attendance is falling. Leaders rigorously follow this up, working with families and pupils to remove any barriers to attendance. The school effectively works with outside agencies where necessary. Leaders take effective action to support those pupils who do not attend regularly, including disadvantaged pupils, to improve their attendance. These actions have successfully improved pupils' attendance and reduced persistent absence. Overall, attendance has improved this year and is above national average.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to each other and to staff. Routines are well established around the school. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. In social times, pupils interact calmly and manage their emotions effectively. Pupils are keen to learn. Staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policies. Pupils engage in lessons and listen well. They trust staff to deal with any concerns that they may have, which they do. Suspension rates are low, and suspensions are used appropriately. Leaders make necessary adjustments to support any pupil who is struggling to follow routines. This enables them to re-engage with their learning effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a well structured and sequenced curriculum across the school. It is designed using research and evidence. The curriculum helps pupils build their knowledge over time. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to explain difficult content. This helps pupils to understand and remember their learning.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They identify where improvements are needed and take effective action to improve teaching. Teachers explain new knowledge clearly. They use the knowledge pupils already have to introduce new ideas. In some subjects, teachers carry out checks effectively to establish what pupils know and can do. However, in some subjects teachers do not check learners' understanding as effectively. When this happens, they do not adjust subsequent teaching in order to address any gaps or misconceptions. Leaders have put in place professional learning to address this. However, the impact is not fully embedded.

The adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are highly effective at removing barriers. Teachers use them in lessons routinely. This helps pupils to access their learning. Pupils who have not secured the knowledge they need in reading and mathematics received tailored interventions. This helps them to catch up.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the post-16 provision. They have put in place a broad and ambitious curriculum. Students' achievement is broadly in line with national averages in external examinations. Teachers in the sixth form have expert subject

knowledge. They check what students know to identify and address gaps in their understanding. This helps students to build on what they already know and to apply this knowledge to new learning.

Students are well prepared for their next stages in employment, education and training. They receive high-quality guidance which means they are ambitious for their future. They know what they need to do to achieve their goals.

The school supports students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress well through the sixth form. Adaptations are appropriate and remove barriers to their learning. This enables them to achieve well both academically and socially.

Sixth-form students take part in a wide range of clubs. These build on the opportunities in the rest of the school. Students act as leaders and role models to younger pupils. They value these opportunities and recognise the benefits to them and the wider school community.

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

Pupils feel well supported by staff. They build positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern. They are confident it will be resolved. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support and personalised learning. This gives pupils the opportunity to thrive in school.

Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school. They live up to the 'BARTS values' as they strive to be brave, ambitious, respectful, trustworthy and safe. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and follow the agreed routines. Pupils are polite and engage well in their learning. They behave well at social times, with older pupils acting as role models to their younger peers. Staff effectively deal with the rare instances of bullying.

Pupils attend school well. They have positive attitudes to their learning. Most pupils achieve well above the national average in a breadth of subjects. However, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well. Pupils recall what they have learned in lessons because teaching is effective. Pupils' work is of a high standard. Where a small number of pupils have barriers to their education, they are supported to achieve well from their starting points.

The personal development programme builds pupils' confidence and understanding of the world. Pupils are keen to take part in wider opportunities such as sports, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Combined Cadet Force. They have the opportunity to learn about different cultures. This enables pupils to be ready for the next steps and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding in all subjects so that it informs subsequent teaching and ensures that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well.
 - Leaders should continue to ensure that their strategies to improve attendance support pupils to attend regularly, including those who are disadvantaged.
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About this inspection

This school is a standalone academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David Fitter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Norman.

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 leaders, governors, teachers and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

David Fitter: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Paul Grundy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Summerfield, Ofsted Inspector

Tajinder Bhambra, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Johnson, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Morrison, Ofsted Inspector

Alison Robb-Webb, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,930

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,922

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.30%

Well 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: 28.9%

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

2.38%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.50%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	58.1%	45.2%	Above
2023/24 (final)	62.3%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59.2%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	56.1	45.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	55.3	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	57.4	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.37	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.58	-0.03	Above

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	14.3%	25.6%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25.0%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	28.4	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.0	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.68	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.43	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	14.3%	52.8%	-38.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	33.3%	53.1%	-19.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	25.0%	52.4%	-27.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	28.4	50.3	-21.9
2023/24 (final)	32.7	50.0	-17.3
2022/23 (final)	41.0	50.3	-9.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.68	0.16	-0.84
2022/23 (final)	-0.43	0.17	-0.59

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	98%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.37	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.82	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.54	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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)	7.7%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	9.0%	Below

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)	18.8%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.6%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	16.1%	26.5%	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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