

St John's CofE Primary School

Address: Sallowbush Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 7LA

Unique reference number (URN): 144289

Inspection report: 24 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils learn and achieve well. They progress through the curriculum well, remembering much of what they have been taught. Younger pupils secure their knowledge of phonics, mathematics and writing skills, which helps them as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards which are close to the national averages in end of key stage 2 assessments. Over time, disadvantaged pupils have achieved better than the same group nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well from their varied starting points. They, too, develop the important knowledge and skills they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. Children in the Reception classes are well prepared for their move to Year 1. On the whole, they have the academic and social skills they need to be successful in their next stage of learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations around pupils' attendance. They expect pupils to attend regularly, which they do. Leaders keep a close eye on attendance. If a pupil's attendance starts to drop, staff follow this up quickly. This work is effective at getting attendance back on track. In the past, too many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities missed too much school. This is no longer the case. As a result of leaders' rigorous and supportive actions, the attendance of these pupils is now back to where it should be.

The school is a calm and purposeful place for pupils to learn and socialise together. Pupils recognise and value the high expectations that leaders and staff set around their behaviour. These expectations are consistent across the school and generally realised in classrooms. This includes during social times, where, in the dinner hall and playground, the same positive behaviour is seen from pupils. Bullying is almost unheard of. However, pupils are fully reassured that if they have friendship problems staff will always help them resolve issues that arise. The pupils who are selected as peer mediators play an important role in helping pupils resolve minor issues in the playground well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have put in place an ambitious and coherent curriculum across the school. This clearly sets out the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember and by when. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths in teaching. They also know where more work is needed to further improve teaching. They take the right actions at the right time. For example, leaders' recent work to enhance teaching approaches that help pupils develop their reasoning skills in mathematics is proving successful.

Teachers have suitable knowledge in the subjects they teach. They provide clear explanations to pupils when introducing new concepts or ideas and generally check if pupils remember what has been taught. However, at times some pupils' misconceptions are not identified consistently well. At times, some next step targets for pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not as precise as they could be. Leaders are addressing this. However, there is more work to be done to ensure consistency in the practice of all teachers.

Leaders' sharp focus on helping pupils secure the important foundations of reading, writing and mathematics is generally well established. Pupils who need more help to catch up receive useful support. This includes pupils with SEND, who benefit from teachers making careful adjustments to the tasks they carry out.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children settle well in the Reception Year. They learn the routines of the classroom. This can be seen in the way they share, take turns and work together. Children enjoy the warm and caring interactions they have with staff. Not only do these interactions help children feel well cared for and safe, but they also ensure children are helped to develop the important vocabulary and language they need to be successful, for example using the language of 'full, half full and empty' in water play and when applying their phonics skills to writing activities.

As children find their feet in Reception, they develop their own independence quickly. They look after equipment and their classrooms with pride. Children become increasingly resilient when faced with challenges in their learning or play. Children learn to read well. Stories, rhymes and poems are in abundance, and the well-taught phonics programme helps children ready themselves for Year 1 as confident readers. Those pupils who need additional help with reading receive well-tailored support. This helps them to catch up, and crack the phonics code. Staff work well with parents and carers to help them understand the work of the school and how their children will learn.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

There is a well-established culture of inclusion across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the right support at the right time. Staff make careful use of assessment, provide targeted interventions and make timely checks on the progress of pupils with SEND. This helps staff to tailor support to the needs of each pupil. Positive relationships with parents, carers and external agencies ensure that the provision for pupils with SEND is shaped around their individual needs. This has a positive impact on their learning and school experience.

Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who are known to social care, receive high-quality care and support. Over time, disadvantaged pupils fare very well academically by the end of their time here. Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding supports this and helps disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. Furthermore, leaders ensure that staff are well trained to help pupils overcome barriers to their learning effectively. Young carers are supported well. Leaders ensure that they have the opportunity to access pastoral and wellbeing provision in a supportive environment.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a sharp and accurate understanding of the school's context, what is working well and where further improvement is needed. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of school improvement, taking the right actions, in the right order, at the right time.

Staff's wellbeing and workload are carefully managed. Staff receive effective support from leaders to help them carry out their roles well. This includes teachers new to the profession at the very start of their teaching career. Staff receive effective professional learning opportunities. Whether through the trust, leaders in school or external providers, this professional learning supports a more consistent approach to teaching across the school.

Trustees carry out their statutory duties effectively. They remain strategic in their work. While they provide effective support for leaders, they do not shy away from asking challenging questions to ensure the school goes from strength to strength. Trustees receive useful information from leaders. They challenge and check to make sure all is well. There are effective connections and communication between trustees, trust leaders and school leaders. This helps to ensure that strategic decisions are taken carefully and with the best interests of pupils at the heart of any changes.

Leaders foster very positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents appreciate the care, guidance and support provided to pupils in school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development offer is broad and purposeful. It is designed to raise aspirations, build character and prepare pupils for life beyond school. It benefits all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The personal, social and health education curriculum revises key concepts each year. Leaders make thoughtful adaptations and additions in response to emerging issues. Relationships education and helping pupils to consider the impact of artificial intelligence are examples of this. Pupils also develop an understanding of people who come from different backgrounds or have different religious beliefs to themselves. This helps pupils to build a secure understanding of themselves and develop respect for others.

Pupils learn a range of strategies to help promote their own wellbeing and to stay healthy. Where pupils need further support, much is provided through mentoring or counselling. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to take on leadership and service roles. Those who sit on the student parliament are proud to do this. They make real changes to the school community, such as securing funding for new play equipment.

Pupils have a clear view of right and wrong. They display a well-developed moral code. Pupils are clear that they will not be a bystander if they see wrongdoing in school. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe. They have an age-appropriate understanding of risks they face now and as they grow older.

While the offer in terms of clubs is growing, pupils enjoy attending what is on offer. Clubs are widely attended, providing the chance for pupils to explore interests, develop new skills and enjoy time with friends. Together, these broad experiences help to develop confident,

socially aware and well-rounded young people who are well readied for their life in wider society.

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

Pupils benefit from the individualised care and guidance they each receive. Staff understand what each pupil requires. This means, whatever pupils' individual needs or barriers to learning, staff do their best to help them succeed. Staff 'expect the best' of pupils. Pupils live up to these expectations. They work hard and show great effort during their time in the school.

Many different languages are spoken in school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive high-quality support to help them learn to communicate in English. Many benefit from student translators. These pupils delight in helping their friends who speak the same language understand and communicate with ever-growing confidence. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils fare very well. This is because staff provide appropriate strategies to help reduce their barriers to learning.

Pupils attend regularly. In the past, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) did not attend regularly enough. As a result of leaders' actions, these pupils now attend very well. This means they benefit from the well-tailored support provided for pupils with SEND.

Classrooms are calm and welcoming places. Pupils can concentrate in lessons because they and their peers behave well. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and one another. Incidents of bullying are rare, but any concerns are quickly addressed. Pupils progress through the curriculum well, whatever their own individual needs or starting points.

Whether a peer mediator, a sports leader or a 'womble' who ensures the school grounds are free from litter, pupils delight in carrying out their responsibilities. Older pupils support their younger friends, instilling values, such as responsibility, that stand pupils in good stead as they move through the school. Pupils see the value of their actions in helping them become responsible members of the school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to fully embed highly effective teaching, across all subjects in the curriculum, with a particular focus on teachers identifying misconceptions consistently well, leading to precise activities being used to support pupils to address these errors.
 - Leaders should endeavour to ensure that pupils' achievement is reflected in above-average outcomes in national tests over time.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Adrian Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson.

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 and other senior leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the trust board and the chief executive officer of the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2022.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rebecca Soper

Lead inspector:

Nathan Lowe, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Susan Sutton, Ofsted Inspector

Stephanie Wilcox, 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 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

322

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)

31.37%

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

4.04%

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

9.63%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	68%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	60%	Above

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	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	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	73%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	60%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	55%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	60%	44%	Above

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	70%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	67%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	65%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average

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	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	60%	68%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	55%	69%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	67%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	66%	-6 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	70%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	80%	-7 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	67%	78%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	65%	78%	-13 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	78%	-5 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	64%	77%	-13 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	70%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	64%	79%	-16 pp
2022/23 (final)	68%	79%	-11 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)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	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)	11.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	19.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	17.5%	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.

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