

Graffham Church of England Infant School (Voluntary Controlled)

Address: Graffham, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0NJ

Unique reference number (URN): 148396

Inspection report: 6 May 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 ●

Leaders have a highly effective understanding of the early years provision. They are ambitious for children's early development. They have designed a well-sequenced and carefully planned curriculum. It supports children to develop the knowledge and skills they need for future learning. Leaders are rigorous in checking the quality of provision. They make timely and effective changes, where needed. This ensures that children are well supported to achieve a good level of development.

Staff consistently maximise opportunities to engage children in high-quality interactions throughout the day. They are proactive in identifying children who need additional support. As a result, children, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop a broad vocabulary and a detailed understanding across the 7 areas of learning. Children are well prepared for the expectations of key stage 1.

Children are happy, safe and fully engaged in their learning. They work happily with their peers, showing care and consideration for one another. Staff skilfully support children's growing independence, intervening to extend learning when needed.

Children sustain their play and engage purposefully in activities. Staff build on these moments effectively. They use children's interests to deepen learning rather than interrupting their engagement. This creates a highly productive learning environment in which children develop confidence, independence and a secure foundation for future success.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

On the whole, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders have a clear focus on early reading, ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge and fluency needed to access the wider curriculum. Pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and receive effective extra support. As a result, they develop as increasingly confident and fluent readers.

Pupils generally develop appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They show this in the work they produce and how they talk about their learning. Pupils' handwriting is becoming increasingly accurate and consistent. Recent improvements to the teaching of early writing are beginning to have a positive impact.

Typically, pupils achieve well. Pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make suitable progress from their starting points. Leaders identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills accurately and take timely action to

address them. As a result, most pupils catch up quickly and are able to keep up with their peers.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff have an accurate understanding of pupils' attendance. They have high expectations and act quickly to work with parents and carers when concerns arise. Leaders use a range of appropriate strategies to address attendance. They analyse information carefully to identify patterns and trends. This enables them to understand the causes of absence and take timely action. Overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages. Leaders recognise that further improvements are possible. They continue to refine their approaches to support families and secure even better attendance.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, which staff reinforce consistently. Staff act as positive role models. They explicitly teach pupils about appropriate behaviour and routines. As a result, pupils behave well, follow established routines and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils behave with care and kindness towards others. They show great empathy at a young age. This contributes to a calm and purposeful environment in which pupils feel safe. Any incidences of bullying are extremely rare. Leaders deal with any incidents of poor behaviour appropriately and swiftly. The use of suspension is proportionate and used only when necessary.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate and well-informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have designed a curriculum that is suitable, well planned and appropriately sequenced. It identifies clear end points and builds securely on what pupils have previously learned. On the whole, leaders ensure that staff deliver the curriculum effectively.

Teachers draw on information they gather to check pupils' understanding and address any errors. This supports pupils to build their knowledge over time. Recent actions to strengthen important skills, particularly in handwriting and mathematics, are improving pupils' learning. Clear routines are being established. Staff are implementing agreed approaches consistently.

A new programme for teaching writing is not yet consistently delivered. Leaders are embedding an increasingly structured approach to support pupils to develop their writing skills more securely. This strategy is beginning to develop pupils' stamina and accuracy in writing in preparation for the next stage of their education.

Leaders prioritise teaching that includes all pupils. They ensure that everyone can take part and succeed in their learning. Staff provide targeted support, alongside teaching where needed, particularly in early reading and mathematics. This ensures that pupils who need extra help are able to keep up with the curriculum and continue to make progress.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an inclusive and welcoming culture in which pupils feel valued. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They are ambitious for what they can achieve. They identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, including those of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils who are disadvantaged and those who may face other barriers. Leaders monitor the impact of support effectively. They regularly check what pupils know, remember and can do. As a result, the support provided typically reduces barriers to learning and supports pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders continue to refine how they adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. Staff receive suitable training and guidance. This enables them to meet pupils' needs increasingly effectively. Most pupils receive the support they need to access the curriculum and make progress from their starting points. While appropriate strategies are in place, these are not implemented as consistently as leaders would like. Leaders are taking steps to support staff so that adaptations more precisely meet pupils' needs and further reduce barriers to learning.

Support for pupils who are disadvantaged is carefully considered. Leaders work constructively with external professionals and agencies to secure appropriate provision and support for pupils with SEND. This demonstrates a secure commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a secure understanding of the school's context, strengths and priorities for development. They use this understanding to take appropriate action to improve pupils' experiences. They have a clear vision. It places a sharp focus on relationships, early development and securing pupils' important knowledge and skills in preparation for key stage 2.

Leaders demonstrate high expectations and professionalism. They act as effective role models for staff and pupils, both in their conduct and in their ambition for what pupils can achieve. Leaders make decisions with pupils' best interests in mind. They have a clear commitment to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education.

Leaders have introduced changes to strengthen the curriculum, including new approaches to handwriting and writing. While these developments have increased staff workload, leaders have taken steps to manage this carefully. They have ensured that staff have enough time and support to make these changes effectively. As a result, staff feel valued and supported. Pupils are benefiting from these improvements.

The professional learning programme is well designed and rooted in evidence. It supports staff to develop their expertise and contributes positively to the quality of teaching over time. Leaders prioritise staff development. They create opportunities for collaboration, helping to build a committed and effective team.

Leaders have established a coherent personal development programme that contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities that extend beyond the taught curriculum. These support the development of their character and talents. For example, pupils take part in extra-curricular clubs offered by the school. They can also share their achievements and celebrate their successes, including performing music in assemblies and displaying artwork across the school and in the local community. As a result, pupils develop confidence and are proud to be a part of the school.

The school provides a variety of wider opportunities that enable pupils to engage meaningfully with their local community. Visits to places such as local farms, the library and a nearby National Trust site enrich pupils' experiences. Visits from community figures such as the coastguard, police and 'The Hedgehog Man' develop pupils' understanding of roles and responsibilities. These opportunities help pupils to develop their understanding of the world around them. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and beliefs. They carefully consider the texts that staff share to support this development.

Pupils know that staff value their opinions. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to have a voice in school life and respond thoughtfully to their views. For example, in the early years, children use a voting system to choose stories. This is an example of how staff support an early understanding of democratic processes. As a result, pupils feel listened to and speak positively about their school.

Pupils' wellbeing is carefully supported. Positive, caring relationships are integral within the school. Leaders also provide targeted pastoral support for any pupils who need it. Opportunities such as caring for the school guinea pigs and using 'gratitude journals' help pupils to regulate their emotions and develop the language needed to express their feelings.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school, where they feel safe, valued and part of a close community. They build warm, respectful relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils show kindness and consideration in their day-to-day interactions. They are confident that staff will listen and act if they have any concerns. Bullying and unkind behaviour are extremely rare.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand routines and follow them consistently. This helps to create a calm and purposeful environment. Children in the early years quickly learn how to cooperate, share and take turns. Across the school, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They enjoy the range of subjects they study and are increasingly confident in reading, writing and mathematics, which supports their learning. Pupils consistently work and play happily together. Breaktimes are harmonious and joyful.

Pupils achieve well from their starting points. They build knowledge securely over time and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Those who need extra help, including

pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive support that enables them to take part fully in lessons and make progress alongside their peers. As a result, most pupils keep up with the curriculum.

Pupils feel that they truly belong. They appreciate opportunities to share their ideas and influence school life. A deep sense of community is evident in shared experiences, such as performing the 'Graffham and Duncton Song', created by staff and incorporating the school's values. This reflects pupils' pride in their school and their sense of unity. Pupils also take part in a range of wider opportunities, including visits and activities. These help them understand the world around them and develop confidence beyond the classroom.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed the school's writing programme to further develop pupils' stamina and accuracy in preparedness for key stage 2.
 - Leaders should continue to develop teaching strategies so that they are systematically and skilfully adjusted to further support pupils with barriers to their learning.
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About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Henrietta Aparicio and Roy Barden.

The school is part of a federation called Lavington Park Federation.

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, assistant headteacher, staff and parents during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority, the diocese, the co-chairs of governors and representatives of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection was on 16 January 2019.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Charles Beckerson

Lead inspector:

Ian Howie, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Graham Chisnell, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

47

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

60

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)

6.38%

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: 26.3%

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

2.13%

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

17.02%

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

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).

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 (3 term)	6.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.6%	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 (3 term)	16.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.9%	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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