

Scole Church of England Primary Academy

Address: Norwich Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk, IP21 4ED

Unique reference number (URN): 149502

Inspection report: 3 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 

The small number of pupils on roll means published data does not provide a reliable picture of achievement across the school.

Pupils make a positive start in the early years. They acquire the key knowledge they need, which provides secure foundations as they move into Year 1. Some pupils have some gaps in their learning but catch up quickly. For example, pupils practise forming their letters intensively. This supports them to write fluently when these skills are not yet well developed. As a result, pupils, overall, achieve well and typically meet expectations. On occasion, staff miss opportunities that would support pupils to achieve an even higher standard.

Achievement in the wider curriculum is positive. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), speak enthusiastically about the knowledge they learn in subjects such as science and history. They develop a secure and increasingly deep understanding across the range of curriculum subjects. Pupils with SEND progress well from their different starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils attend regularly. Attendance rates remain consistently above national averages over the past 3 years, including for vulnerable groups. The school creates an open and positive environment where staff welcome pupils and their families. When addressing less-positive attendance, the school uses clear systems and processes. A trained, dedicated member of staff analyses attendance data weekly to ensure leaders hold an up-to-date and accurate picture. This enables leaders to act quickly and offer support and, when necessary, apply challenge where attendance risks falling below their high expectations.

Leaders build a culture of behaviour based on positive relationships. Staff receive training in the school's clear approaches. Leaders model effective behaviour management consistently. Behaviour around the school is typically positive and well managed. When pupils are new to the school and are still learning the school's expectations and routines, staff support them well to correct any incidents of unkind or inappropriate conduct quickly. Pupils generally listen carefully in class. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning. Classrooms typically remain calm and support pupils to learn successfully. At playtimes, pupils generally behave appropriately but would benefit from additional activities to make these times calmer and more structured.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

School and trust leaders hold an accurate and well informed understanding of teaching and learning. They make the right decisions to improve this area. For example, they have implemented a clear and progressive curriculum that identifies the knowledge and vocabulary which pupils learn in each subject, starting in early years.

Staff deliver the school's well-designed phonics programme consistently and effectively, strengthened by high-quality training. This enables pupils to learn letters and sounds quickly. Staff check pupils' progress in early reading and provide timely additional support when needed. This helps pupils keep up or catch up with their peers. Staff also support pupils to embed early number recognition and develop early writing habits through daily activities.

Teachers typically teach the curriculum effectively. They usually take account of pupils' differing needs within mixed-age classes. They use strategies such as targeted questioning to support learning. Teachers design provision carefully for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that staff understand and address pupils' needs well in lessons and enables pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their peers.

At times, however, staff do not give explanations as clearly as they could. This means pupils do not understand learning tasks as well as they might. On other occasions, teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge to prompt deeper thinking or to encourage pupils to tackle the harder work they are capable of completing.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a positive start to their education in the early years. Staff prepare them well for Year 1. Positive relationships with parents and carers, alongside close links with local nurseries, help children settle quickly. Parents value the opportunities the school provides to help them understand how to support their children's learning.

Leaders ensure the school curriculum begins in the early years so children start learning key knowledge and skills immediately. For example, children make a secure start in learning to read. Staff model accurate pronunciation of sounds and words, which helps children learn phonics effectively. Children enjoy sharing books and listening to stories that link to their wider curriculum learning. They join in enthusiastically with rhymes and songs. Staff also prioritise early counting and early writing as key parts of the curriculum.

Children show enthusiasm and motivation for learning and feel safe and happy in the learning environment. They interact positively with one another and behave well. Children consistently follow class routines and meet expectations. They enjoy exploring the learning environment and extend their learning through well-planned activities. During these opportunities, staff promote and support the development of children's language and vocabulary well. Most interactions are meaningful and support children to extend their learning. Staff use their knowledge of each child to support those with additional needs effectively.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture in which pupils are known, welcomed and supported.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively through well-established approaches that address barriers to learning. They adjust support thoughtfully to meet pupils' individual needs. As a result, pupils with SEND progress

appropriately from their varied starting points. The school and trust inclusion teams provide regular support and staff training. This enables them to understand pupils' needs and typically meet them well in the classroom.

The school actively engages with external professionals to secure the support pupils need. Where necessary, the school goes beyond what is generally available. For example, the school has implemented additional support for pupils' social and emotional needs. Leaders recognise this as an area requiring attention to help disadvantaged pupils be ready for school.

A suitably targeted pupil premium strategy is in place for the school's disadvantaged pupils. This reflects the school's context. For example, the school has implemented additional support for pupils' social and emotional needs. Leaders have recognised this as an area requiring attention to support disadvantaged pupils' readiness for school. This is working well. Disadvantaged pupils attend well and are supported effectively to access learning alongside their peers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

School and trust leaders hold an accurate and well-informed understanding of the school's strengths and the next steps in its development. Leaders have brought about significant positive changes following a period of transition. For example, they prioritise work to develop the curriculum and support teachers to deliver it effectively. This has been a significant and well-focused improvement area. Training and support for staff is comprehensive and well considered. Staff receive substantial professional development from the wider trust. Working within a small school, staff value opportunities to work closely with colleagues across other schools and access regular, research-informed training.

Staff feel well supported regarding their workload and well-being. They appreciate the way leaders listen to them and take their views into account when making decisions about school improvement. Parents and carers feel part of the school community and value the way they can approach leaders and feel listened to.

Governance arrangements are robust and provide strong support to the school at local and trust levels. Clear roles and responsibilities ensure that each layer provides the right balance of support and challenge as the school continues its improvement journey. Trust leaders articulate the school's journey and its next steps clearly. They take pride in the improvements already made but remain ambitious for what comes next.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a deliberate, well-planned personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They adapt the curriculum to reflect the school's mixed-age classes while also ensuring pupils learn the right knowledge at the appropriate time. For example, staff teach the relationships and health education curriculum in single-age groups so pupils receive the right content at the right age.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and talk confidently about them. They gain age-appropriate knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and

mentally. Pupils explain sensibly how to keep themselves safe online. They know how to raise concerns if they ever feel unsafe when using modern technology.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values through the curriculum and through additional visitors in school. For example, a local politician visited the school to support pupils' understanding of democracy. Pupils then applied this knowledge to a real-life event when voting for their new school councillors.

Leaders take a deliberate approach to exposing pupils to different cultures and beliefs. They recognise the limited diversity within the school and the local community. Consequently, they ensure strong representation of different ethnicities and cultures in the curriculum. This helps pupils develop respect for, and understanding of, difference.

Pupils feel proud to take on roles of responsibility. They express a desire to take on further responsibilities and look forward to opportunities to broaden these roles and gain a greater voice in school life. The school supports and promotes pupils' wellbeing in several ways. Staff carry out regular check-ins and identify pupils who need this support more frequently. The school also recognises the need to enhance this provision further. Staff help to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils who have joined the school.

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

Warm relationships and a caring ethos shine through Scole Church of England Academy. Staff warmly greet pupils each morning. Pupils enter school happily, ready to learn. Pupils feel safe and are well supported by staff.

Pupils enjoy their learning and attend school regularly. They eagerly share their favourite subjects and recent learning with visitors. The school's carefully planned curriculum supports pupils to learn key knowledge across subjects successfully. Staff carefully identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to learn effectively. As a result, pupils are well prepared academically for the next stage of their education.

Pupils typically behave positively in and around school. Pupils report that bullying is rare and they have confidence that staff will deal with any incidents fairly and quickly. They work hard to make the right choices in class, and most do this consistently. Staff maintain high expectations which allow learning to continue with minimal disruption. In the playground, most pupils behave appropriately and get along with others. Staff effectively support any pupils who find this part of the day difficult. Pupils say they would appreciate more structured activities and games to make breaktimes more stimulating and engaging.

The school enriches the curriculum with opportunities that broaden pupils' horizons and offer experiences they may not encounter elsewhere. For example, older pupils enjoy a residential trip to London. School councillors meet regularly to discuss key issues in and around school after being elected by their peers. This helps pupils have a better understanding of how democracy works. The school ensures all pupils, including those from

disadvantaged backgrounds, receive the same opportunities and experiences as everybody else.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to support staff to develop their teaching so that explanations of key knowledge and vocabulary are consistently clear and precise.
 - Leaders should support staff to ensure that pupils access harder work when they are ready, enabling them to achieve more highly.
 - Leaders should support staff to strengthen provision during less-structured times of the day so that these periods are even calmer and more positive for pupils.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich St Benet's multi-academy trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sam Nixon, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Paul Dunning.

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 a range of school and trust leaders, the chair of the local governance committee, the CEO, and a group of trustees, including the chair, during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with staff, parents and carers and pupils during the inspection.

The executive headteacher was absent from school at the time of the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Norwich. Its last section 48 inspection was in October 2025.

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Jo Cerullo

Lead inspector:

Jonny Wallace, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Alastair Heath-Robinson, 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 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

38

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

105

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)

21.05%

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

0.00%

Well 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

50.00%

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

Close to 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		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (revised)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	44%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

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%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23		79%	

‘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)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	5.9%	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)	8.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	18.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.6%	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.

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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