

Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School

Address: Church Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9HT

Unique reference number (URN): 116315

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well overall. In early reading, most pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. As a result, pupils develop accuracy and fluency in reading and are well prepared to access the wider curriculum by the end of key stage 1.

Most pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are typically close to, or above, national averages. Leaders are working to increase the number of pupils who exceed these standards. They have identified handwriting and transcription as areas that limit some pupils' achievement in writing and are taking appropriate action to address this.

Across the curriculum, pupils can generally recall important knowledge and apply it in their work. In most subjects, the work that pupils produce reflects the knowledge and skills they have learned. Disadvantaged pupils make progress from their starting points. Most pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is consistently above national figures for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders carefully analyse attendance information to identify patterns and barriers. They use this information to put in place individual and proportionate strategies to support pupils and families and prevent pupils from frequently missing school. Leaders' monitoring and positive relationships with families help to sustain this.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and engage well in their work. When pupils are less engaged, this is linked to the suitability of the task. Staff model and reinforce clear expectations, which helps classrooms to remain calm and purposeful. Pupils are polite, respectful towards others and work well with their peers. They form constructive relationships with staff. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour receive tailored support. Where necessary, leaders work with external agencies so that pupils receive the support they need.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. They are happy, feel safe and are well cared for. Staff know children and their families well and establish clear routines that help children to settle quickly. Leaders prioritise the early years and have an accurate understanding of the provision.

The curriculum identifies the essential knowledge and skills children need for later learning. There is a clear focus on communication and language, early reading and mathematics. Teaching supports children to learn the intended knowledge and skills. Staff balance support with encouraging children to develop independence and confidence. Staff interactions and

planned activities help children to develop their vocabulary. Reading is prioritised, and children begin learning systematic synthetic phonics from the start. However, at times, the outdoor environment is not used effectively to support learning.

Staff use assessment to inform planning and the deployment of adults. Most children make suitable progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1. Staff share gaps in learning with Year 1 staff so that targeted support can be put in place.

Staff identify barriers and adapt provision to support disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known or previously known to children's social care. Children's wellbeing is supported through positive relationships and effective care routines.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff support pupils to reduce barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those known or previously known to children's social care. Support is organised to help pupils play a full part in school life.

Leaders understand that high-quality, inclusive teaching is at the heart of effective inclusion. They support staff to make adaptations to classroom practice so that pupils with barriers to their learning can access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work with external professionals and parents to ensure that support is matched to pupils' needs.

Leaders check the impact of the support in place. They gather a range of information, including progress information, and make timely adjustments where needed. Disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those known or previously known to children's social care make progress from their starting points over time.

Leaders use pupil premium funding to benefit disadvantaged pupils and reduce barriers to their learning and wellbeing. They keep inclusion as a strategic priority and continually adapt their approach to pupils' changing needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's context and areas for development. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, leaders have acted to address key priorities, and the impact of their actions is evident. They deploy staff thoughtfully and promote a culture of professionalism. Leaders work constructively with parents, the local authority, the diocese and external partners. These collaborative relationships support the school's capacity to improve.

Leaders act in the best interests of pupils and uphold the professional standards expected of them. They maintain high expectations for what pupils can achieve and promote a positive culture built on respectful relationships. Staff and families speak positively about the integrity of leaders and the impact of their work so far. Leaders prioritise professional development and have established an evidence-informed programme linked to improvement priorities. Staff value the support and training they receive as changes to the curriculum and teaching

are introduced. Leaders and governors consider workload and wellbeing when planning and introducing change.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and provide support and challenge to leaders. They understand the school's context and the impact of recent leadership changes. Systems for monitoring typically provide governors with suitable oversight of the school's work, including outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the use of additional funding. However, not all governors yet have the depth of knowledge and expertise needed to ensure that challenge is consistently robust across all areas of the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from a broad personal development programme that meets statutory requirements and is appropriate for their age. The curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills pupils need for later life, including how to keep themselves safe online. Leaders adapt and refine the programme when necessary to respond to emerging risks and changing contexts.

Pupils develop social skills, empathy and respect through the school's vision and values and planned curriculum activities. They demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of differences and protected characteristics. Pupils learn about relationships and the diversity of families. They show tolerance of different views and beliefs. Pupils can recall what they have learned and can discuss some key concepts. However, checks on understanding are not used consistently to secure pupils' understanding of key concepts.

Pupils' understanding of British values is developing. They experience democracy through activities such as voting for school councillors. Pupils take on leadership roles, including ambassadors and worship leaders, which help them to build confidence and responsibility. Opportunities to contribute to the local community, including visits to the local residential home and links with the local church, support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Trips are carefully planned to enrich learning and provide memorable experiences, including visits to the Tower of London and residential trips. Pupils take part in clubs and competitive sports that nurture their interests and talents. Leaders track participation and act to remove barriers so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can take part.

Pastoral support is well established. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly when additional help is needed. Pupils trust adults, know how to access support and develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles and positive mental wellbeing.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching and recognise where further improvement is needed. At present, teachers do not consistently

check pupils' understanding to identify misconceptions and errors. This means that, in some lessons, activities do not build securely on pupils' prior learning. As a result, errors in pupils' transcription skills are not always addressed quickly enough across the curriculum. Leaders have identified these weaknesses and have begun to take appropriate action.

The curriculum is broad and logically sequenced. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, follow the same curriculum. Staff put in place adaptations to reduce barriers to pupils' learning so pupils can access the same curriculum. Leaders provide training and support for staff. Leaders have begun to upskill staff and raise expectations in teaching, and some improvements are evident.

Mathematics and early reading, through systematic synthetic phonics, are taught effectively. Books are well matched to pupils' reading knowledge, and pupils benefit from high-quality texts. Pupils who fall behind receive structured support to catch up. Across the curriculum, pupils practise key knowledge and develop their language and vocabulary.

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

Pupils enjoy attending Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School. They feel safe, happy and confident in school. Many arrive each day keen to learn and spend time with their friends. Pupils and their families are welcomed warmly. Pupils feel that they belong and are valued as part of the school community. Parents appreciate the support the school offers.

Pupils attend regularly and settle quickly at the start of the day. Clear routines support positive behaviour throughout the school. Pupils behave well, show kindness towards one another and treat adults with respect. Bullying is very rare. Pupils are confident that any unkind behaviour will be dealt with quickly. Pupils play happily together at social times and organise their own games sensibly.

Pupils benefit from trusting relationships with staff, who know them well. As a result, pupils feel confident to talk to an adult if they have any worries. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online and in the community.

Pupils study a broad curriculum, which leaders continue to refine and develop. Most pupils achieve well and are prepared for the next stage of their education. Adults make considered adaptations to teaching so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can take part in the same learning as their peers and succeed alongside them.

Pupils value the opportunities they have to develop responsibility and contribute to school life, such as through roles as school councillors, buddies for younger pupils and ambassadors. They contribute to the local community through links with the church and visits to a nearby residential home. Pupils enjoy clubs, which help them to develop their interests and talents. Pupils take part in trips and visits, including to places such as Hampton Court Palace. These experiences help prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use checks on pupils' learning to inform their teaching so that misconceptions are addressed promptly and lesson content builds securely on what pupils already know.
 - Leaders should embed and strengthen the teaching of transcription skills across key stages 1 and 2 so that pupils develop greater accuracy and fluency in their writing across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that the outdoor provision in early years continues to be developed so that it is as purposeful and impactful as the indoor environment.
 - Governors' monitoring should be refined to support them to develop the knowledge and expertise needed to provide consistently rigorous challenge across all aspects of the school's work.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Edward Ruane.

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 and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.

Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Winchester. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2026.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

There have been significant changes to the leadership team since the previous inspection. The current Headteacher was appointed in January 2026.

Headteacher: Vickie Alvis

Lead inspector:

Stuart Bevan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Sarah Martin, 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

115

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

119

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)

14.78%

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

4.35%

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

10.43%

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 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

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	71%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	90%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	79%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	88%	71%	Above

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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	94%	73%	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 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 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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 (final)	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 (final)	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 (final)	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 (final)	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 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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 (final)	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 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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 (3 term)	3.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.7%	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 (3 term)	6.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.7%	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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