

Cotgrave Church of England Primary School

Address: The Cross, NG12 3HS

Unique reference number (URN): 148880

Inspection report: 2 December 2025

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

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff work well with parents and carers to make sure children have a successful start to their education. Leaders design the early years curriculum carefully and staff deliver it well. Developing children's spoken language is central to the work in the early years. Staff engage in high-quality interactions with children. They model speaking clearly while introducing new words in meaningful ways so that children can practise using them. Leaders prioritise phonics teaching. Children learn to read and spell well.

Staff develop the listening skills of children in the Nursery Year well. This helps prepare them well for learning phonics in the Reception Year. Staff make sure the children are confident singing many nursery rhymes so that they can build towards reading and writing quickly.

Staff provide a thoughtful range of activities that make learning memorable and enable children to develop well in all areas. They adapt the curriculum and teaching suitably for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff monitor children's engagement with activities and offer support and encouragement to extend their learning. Children enjoy playing outdoors and staff inspire them to use their imagination while building with blocks and crates. Overall, children progress well in the early years and typically achieve a good level of development, preparing them well for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have transformed the school's processes to ensure staff quickly identify pupils who face barriers to learning and need more help. Staff seek advice and work closely with a range of external professionals and services to provide the right support. Leaders give staff well-considered training, so they understand specific difficulties and implement appropriate strategies. Leaders and staff set high expectations for every pupil to develop personally and academically. They typically remove barriers to learning so pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the full curriculum and participate in all school activities.

Leaders prioritise building trusting relationships and engaging with parents and carers. Parents are included in decisions about how best to meet their children's individual needs. They speak highly of the nurturing support that staff provide for their children.

Leaders understand the challenges disadvantaged pupils face. They use the pupil premium funding strategically to address these challenges. Staff give these pupils extra help to close gaps in knowledge and enable them to take part in extra-curricular activities. Leaders have taken action to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance, but these efforts have had limited impact.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since becoming an academy and joining the trust, the school has experienced a number of changes. The new leadership team has acted swiftly to improve key areas of the school,

such as inclusion. Recent improvements in the processes for identifying pupils with barriers to learning, and ensuring staff put the right support in place, have had a positive impact. Leaders have also ensured that the curriculum is now ambitious and well designed. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are committed to meeting every pupil's needs so that all pupils can achieve and flourish.

Leaders are ambitious and know where improvements are needed so that the teaching of the curriculum is consistently effective. They have highly appropriate plans in place to build on the recent improvements. Leaders know they need to continue to remove barriers that prevent disadvantaged pupils from attending school more regularly. The trust and dedicated local governing body work effectively together to challenge and support leaders in driving improvement.

Staff are proud to work at this rapidly improving school. They feel that leaders value and include them in shaping the vision for the school and that pupils' best interests are always at the heart of leaders' decisions. Leaders have implemented a tailored programme of professional learning that ensures staff develop their expertise to improve outcomes for pupils.

Parents and carers speak very highly about the school. They recognise and appreciate recent improvements. They especially value the school's fully inclusive ethos. Parents feel leaders and staff listen to and support them well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise their vision to develop well-rounded individuals who flourish by confidently embracing all life has to offer. Pupils learn and talk about ways to keep themselves safe both online and when out and about in the local area. The school teaches pupils about positive mental health and healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Trained staff provide more tailored pastoral support when pupils need it.

The school provides a range of experiences and activities that develop and broaden pupils' talents and develop their character. Pupils enjoy craft clubs, sports and trips to the rowing festival, in addition to residential visits. Pupils speak enthusiastically of how they overcome their fears scrambling through small caves at an outdoor adventure centre. The school makes sure that disadvantaged pupils benefit equally from all these activities.

Pupils learn well about responsibility. They are proud to have roles such as school councillors and worship monitors that enable them to contribute to school life. Helping others makes pupils feel that they belong to the community. Pupils speak with pride about singing with the choir at the local church memory café and visiting residents in the dementia care home.

Pupils are developing their knowledge of the fundamental British values. They understand how these connect to the school's values. Pupils are interested in learning about other cultures and religions, including through celebrating events like Diwali and visiting a synagogue. Pupils believe in treating others as they would like to be treated. They recognise

discrimination is wrong and value the importance of equality. Overall, pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen in Britain today.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

For the past three years, pupils' attainment has been significantly below average in the phonics screening check. Some pupils do not become fluent readers quickly enough, which hinders their learning across the curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The recently introduced phonics programme is helping staff close gaps in pupils' knowledge more rapidly.

Pupils typically achieve well in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. However, this achievement has historically relied too heavily on catching up in the latter stages.

In other subjects, pupils' knowledge is not as well developed as it should be due to historical weaknesses in teaching. Pupils recall facts and discuss topics they have studied, but their understanding often lacks depth and includes misconceptions. Overall, pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for their next stages of learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

The continued poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains a concern for leaders. Although many pupils attend well, this group of pupils miss too much school. Leaders have sharpened their focus on ensuring pupils attend regularly. They monitor attendance patterns closely and provide personalised support to help families overcome barriers. Leaders make sure pupils and families understand why regular attendance matters and celebrate good attendance. While these actions have improved attendance in some cases, progress is often short-lived and does not lead to sustained regular attendance for disadvantaged pupils overall.

Leaders and staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these and behave well. The school has a calm and nurturing atmosphere. Staff support pupils well with clear, established routines so pupils know what staff expect of them. They develop positive relationships with pupils and guide them effectively to make good choices. Pupils typically listen attentively and are keen to show their best in lessons. When pupils struggle to manage their behaviour or emotions, staff provide timely support. Pupils are energetic at playtimes. They play well together, with kindness and respect. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are rare, and pupils trust staff to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Teaching is not consistently effective across the school. Although leaders have improved how effectively the curriculum is taught, sometimes teachers do not focus sharply enough on key knowledge when teaching and checking pupils' understanding. As a result, they do not identify and address pupils' misconceptions often enough. While teachers make some effective adaptations to remove barriers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, they do not consistently match these well to individual needs or consider what pupils already know. Leaders have recognised weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum and have taken appropriate steps to improve it. They provide staff with the training and support they need to develop their expertise.

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum for pupils. They clearly set out the key knowledge pupils need to learn over time. The school prioritises the development of pupils' knowledge in mathematics, reading, and writing. Teachers deliver the mathematics curriculum well. They identify pupils with gaps in knowledge and provide extra help to close these gaps quickly.

Leaders have recognised that the previous phonics programme was not having the desired impact and pupils were not taught to read swiftly enough. The school has recently introduced a new phonics programme and trained staff to deliver it effectively. Children in the early years learn to read well. However, although there has been improvement, the teaching of phonics beyond the early years is still not consistently effective.

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

This school fosters a nurturing, family ethos. Staff know every pupil and understand their needs well. Warm, welcoming relationships between staff and pupils help pupils feel happy and secure. The school's nurturing ethos particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, helping them feel that they belong and are included in all aspects of school life.

Children make a successful start to their education in the early years. Most pupils gain the fundamental knowledge they need to achieve well by the end of key stage 2, preparing them for secondary school. However, pupils' achievement over time and across the breadth of the curriculum remains too variable. Pupils do not become fluent readers as quickly as they should. This is because the school's ambitious curriculum is not taught consistently well, and staff do not routinely address barriers to learning. Leaders are tackling these weaknesses, but changes such as the new phonics programme are still in the early stages. This means they have had little time to make an impact.

The school actively promotes pupils' broader development. A range of clubs and activities nurture their interests. Pupils enjoy performing in school productions, inspired by visits to the pantomime. Residential visits build pupils' character and resilience.

The school's values shape daily life. They encourage pupils to be kind, respectful and positive members of the community. High expectations and clear routines help pupils behave well. Pupils follow instructions and listen attentively in class. Older pupils eagerly support younger pupils on the playground. Pupils enjoy playtimes and feel confident that bullying is very rare at their school. They trust staff to act swiftly to resolve any concerns.

Most pupils attend school regularly, but some of the most disadvantaged pupils still miss too much school. This makes it harder for them to achieve well.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the delivery of the phonics programme beyond early years is embedded, and pupils receive effective support to close gaps in their knowledge quickly when needed.
 - Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school so that pupils progress well across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information and their knowledge of pupils' barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to adapt the curriculum and teaching so that pupils build successfully on what they know.
 - Leaders should ensure that their attendance strategy and use of the pupil premium funding have the intended impact to raise attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham 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 (CEO), Chris Moodie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Hunter.

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 members of the senior leadership team. They also spoke with leaders about their oversight of the school's work in a particular aspect, such as inclusion.

The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust, including with the CEO who is also a trustee, and members of the local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The current headteacher has been in post since September 2024.

The school joined Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust in October 2022. This is the school's first inspection since then.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in May 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2026/27.

The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

Headteacher : Mrs Helen Pearson

Lead inspector:

Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Mark Westmoreland, His Majesty's 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 2 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

109

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

113

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)

14.85%

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

4.59%

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

11.01%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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		61%	
2024/25	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	64%	61%	Close to average
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	87%	75%	Above
2023/24	71%	74%	Close to average
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	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	71%	72%	Close to average
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	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	79%	73%	Close to average
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	S	47%	S
2023/24	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%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	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	S	59%	S
2023/24	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	S	61%	S
2023/24	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	S	69%	S
2023/24	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	S	81%	S
2023/24	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	S	78%	S
2023/24	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	S	81%	S
2023/24	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 (1 term)	4.6%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.9%	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 (1 term)	14.6%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	9.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	11.8%	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.

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