

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Address: Stonyacres, Yetminster, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 6LS

Unique reference number (URN): 144416

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

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that a detailed programme is in place to support pupils' personal development. Lessons are carefully thought out so that they successfully cover the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. For example, pupils learn about different religions and how to keep themselves safe. The school's thoughtful approach enables pupils, particularly older pupils, to talk freely and thoughtfully about sensitive issues such as puberty and consent.

The personal development programme is enhanced with a wide range of meaningful trips, visits and opportunities that pupils enjoy. For example, the chance to contribute to food bank charities helps pupils to build their knowledge of real issues in the wider world. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, such as being on the school council. Pupils' understanding of the school council's role in improving the library contributes to supporting concepts such as democracy. These activities prepare pupils well for their future lives.

Leaders review pupils' participation in clubs and other activities to ensure that pupils make the most of these opportunities. Adjustments are made to ensure all pupils can access additional activities, such as offering lunchtime clubs for those that cannot stay after school. This ensures that pupils who face disadvantage experience the same opportunities as their peers. The personal development programme supports them well.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to an appropriate range of pastoral support. Pupils know how to access support themselves and to report any concerns or worries they may have, for example, through the 'What I wish my teacher knew' boxes in classrooms. Pupils value this support. It helps them to feel safe in school and know that they can trust the adults to support them.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, frequent changes in leadership have resulted in instability in the school. This has affected the quality of education and pupils' achievement in national assessments. Published data indicates that attainment has remained significantly below national averages over the past 3 years for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, the proportion achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is much lower than in other schools.

There are emerging signs of improvement. Recent work to strengthen the teaching of reading is having a positive impact across the school. In classes where expectations are high, and teaching and relationships are strong, the achievement of most pupils is on track. This is typically the case for older pupils. However, this is not a consistent picture across the

school. In some classes, the curriculum is not delivered well enough to ensure all pupils are ready for the next stage.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

The school's expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school are not implemented consistently. As a result, pupils experience different expectations in different parts of the school and at different times of the day. This makes it hard for pupils to remember and understand the school's expectations. In lessons, most pupils work quietly and get on with the task in hand, while others do not focus on their learning. At times, the behaviour of some pupils in lessons distracts others from their work.

Around the school, the majority of pupils conduct themselves well and are polite. Most pupils get on well together and enjoy the social times that they share. Leaders take pupils' worries seriously and take action to deal with their concerns. The number of pupil suspensions has reduced over time due to the additional support put in place for pupils at risk of exclusion.

Leaders promote the importance of attending school regularly. They work closely with parents and carers and other professionals to support pupils to attend school. Attendance is improving for all groups of pupils. Whole-school attendance is close to national figures. Rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also reducing.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

New leaders have rightly identified that some pupils do not get the support they need to secure the early skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils develop the foundational knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage in their education. Some teaching does not ensure that all pupils secure the basic knowledge the first time they are taught it. These pupils go on to repeat basic errors in their work over time. While some staff identify these errors and help pupils to correct them, this does not happen consistently for all pupils. As a result, some pupils struggle with some of the basics. This slows down their learning when they come to new or more difficult tasks.

Leaders have worked with staff to ensure that the curriculum carefully sets out what pupils are expected to learn. Staff have received training to ensure they have the specialist knowledge they need to deliver lessons and activities. The effectiveness of this can be seen in the work to strengthen the teaching of reading. A new approach to teaching phonics, greater support for more able readers and a revamped library are all contributing to improvements in pupils' reading skills.

Early years

Needs attention 

As elsewhere in the school, the expectations of children's behaviour in lessons are unclear. The rules and routines that are intended to teach children how to manage their own learning and behaviour are not understood by all children. This makes it difficult for these children to become confident and independent learners. Consequently, some children do not achieve

as well as they could and are not well prepared for Year 1. Leaders are aware of this and have made recent changes to the curriculum and staff training.

Staff have recently improved the quality of activities in the classroom and outdoors. Children enjoy these new activities and benefit from the conversations they have with adults. This is leading to better opportunities to develop children's language and vocabulary.

Children are well supported to learn to read. They learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year and enjoy singing songs and rhymes together. Most children enjoy sharing stories and can talk about their favourites. Staff work closely with parents and carers, keeping them informed as their children learn and develop. Disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get extra help from staff and outside agencies when needed.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders have recently strengthened the way that staff identify pupils' learning and development needs. They are improving the way that pupils with additional needs and gaps in their knowledge are identified. However, leaders' work is at an early stage.

Some pupils who face barriers to their learning do not get the support they need to be ready for the next stage in their education. At times, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are expected to complete tasks that are too complex for them. When this happens, it makes it more difficult for pupils to learn. Improvements in the quality of teaching are now beginning to address these issues, particularly for older pupils in the school. Leaders' work has started to improve the support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Nonetheless, there remains much to do.

Leaders act on advice and guidance from a wide range of external experts to support pupils' specific needs. Leaders are keen to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders now have detailed knowledge of the difficulties some pupils face and use this information to provide additional opportunities and support, for example by carefully considering how to use any additional funding they receive. This can be seen in the school-wide support for pupils' mental health and the targeted forest school activities arranged for a group of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Over time, changes in leadership in the school and the trust have had an impact on the school's ability to identify and address areas of weaker performance. This resulted in a decline in standards. New leaders in the school have started improving outcomes for all pupils. Together, these leaders have acted promptly to strengthen important areas such as safeguarding and pupils' attendance.

New staff have been appointed into key areas, such as provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have made effective use of a trust-wide project to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise they need to deliver the curriculum. This is leading to better outcomes for some pupils. Leaders know, although there are early signs of improvement, that much of this work is still in its early stages.

Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. However, current plans for improvement do not focus sharply enough on the school's priorities. This is slowing the progress that the school is able to make.

Leaders in the trust and the local governing body have effective oversight of all areas of the school's performance. In some areas, this oversight is well informed by a range of information. However, this is not the case in all areas. This makes it difficult for governors and the trust to hold leaders to account equally across all areas of the school's performance.

Governors value the work of the new leaders and the positive impact this is having. Staff are supportive of the school's direction and the higher expectations introduced by leaders. Staff recognise and value the steps leaders have taken to manage workload and promote wellbeing during this period of rapid improvement.

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

St Andrew's school has been through a period of instability that has impacted on the quality of education that pupils receive. This has reduced the effectiveness of the teaching and support that pupils receive. Over time, pupils have not had the support they need to become confident in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, the results that pupils achieve in national assessments are much lower than in other schools.

Recent changes in school have resulted in improvements to pupils' attendance and personal development, as well as the way in which the school keeps pupils safe.

Pupils are safe and happy at school. They are well supported by caring staff and they are treated fairly. Pupils consider that bullying is rare. They trust that staff will help them if they are concerned about something. Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects on offer and the extra opportunities they get. However, sometimes, pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of others during lessons. This makes it harder for pupils to learn.

Most parents and carers who provided feedback to inspectors value the wide range of activities and events on offer. They generally consider the school to be a friendly place. Some parents are concerned about the way some pupils behave.

New leaders have acted swiftly to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support they need. Leaders are improving the information and support available to families. They are keen to offer additional support to families, for example by providing free breakfast club places and running their own food bank.

Next steps

- Leaders should reduce barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, making sure that learning activities closely match what these pupils know and can do.

- Leaders should raise achievement by ensuring that all staff have the knowledge and support they need to quickly identify and address gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge.
 - Leaders should clarify the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons, ensuring that rules and routines are clearly implemented by staff and understood and followed by pupils.
 - Leaders and governors should ensure that actions designed to improve the school's performance are focused on identified priorities and are closely monitored.
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About this inspection

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.

This school is part of the Sherborne Area Schools 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, David Watson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Middleton.

The school and multi academy trust have undergone some significant changes in senior leadership since the last inspection. A permanent head of school is now in place.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other school staff. Inspectors also met with members of the trust and members of the local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection on behalf of the Diocese of Salisbury took place in December 2023.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Head of school: Anna Hedges

Lead inspector:

Phil Minns, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspector:

Lizzy Meadows, 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

107

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

200

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)

20.56%

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

0.93%

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

25.23%

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

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	31%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	31%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	26%	60%	Below

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	61%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

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	48%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	38%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	52%	71%	Below

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	37%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	47%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	26%	73%	Below

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	10%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	50%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	10%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	10%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	10%	68%	-58 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

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

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	10%	78%	-68 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	10%	80%	-70 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.8%	5.9%	Above

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)	11.0%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.4%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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