

St Barnabas Church of England Primary School

Address: Poplar Close, Warmley, Bristol, BS30 5NW

Unique reference number (URN): 149949

Inspection report: 28 April 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

Early years

Expected standard 

The trust has supported the school to strengthen early years provision. Children benefit from an ambitious curriculum from the new nursery class for 2-year-olds through to the Reception class. Each area of learning is carefully planned and adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children. For example, leaders noticed that children needed more activities to help with their personal, social and emotional development. They adapted the curriculum appropriately and children have made progress in this area. Children thrive because staff have established clear routines which help children feel safe. They develop a keen sense of right and wrong. Staff expertly model new vocabulary and interact with children positively, developing their vocabulary and language.

Children are increasingly able to sustain their attention because activities have been skilfully designed. For example, children in Reception independently use their phonics and mathematics knowledge to write shopping lists and play games with their friends. In Nursery, staff support children to develop gross and fine motor skills through jumping and balancing.

The youngest children, and older children who need help with personal care, receive this. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. For example, children who are at pre-verbal stage of development, and those with autism receive intensive support from staff who have specialist training.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff work tenaciously to accurately identify pupils' needs and remove any barriers to learning that they may face. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and cared for. Pupils with education, health and care plans have their needs met in a variety of ways, including through careful commissioning of alternative provision and other therapeutic interventions, such as music therapy. Younger pupils, including children in the early years who have significant delays in their speech and language development, receive intensive support from well-trained staff. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and shows that most pupils with SEND progress well from their starting points.

Leaders use additional funding for financially disadvantaged pupils appropriately. For example, financial assistance is provided to ensure these pupils can attend trips and visit places which enable them to broaden their horizons, such as visiting a literary festival in Bath. This has also had a positive impact on the attendance of some of these pupils. Staff work sensitively with families who are experiencing challenges, including those who are open to social care. For example, they provide additional pastoral support to pupils who need this.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils understand the school's values of ambition, compassion and resilience. They learn about these in assemblies and they are reinforced in their interactions with staff. In

particular, pupils show compassion to one another. They understand that people are different and the importance of not discriminating against others. Indeed, pupils talk with confidence about supporting their peers, for example, those with disabilities.

The school promotes cultural awareness and awareness of diversity through arranging visits from speakers such as a local medal winning-boxer and ethnic minority authors. Pupils enjoy a range of trips, such as visits to the SS Great Britain, Bristol Aerospace Museum, a Victorian school and Stonehenge. Older pupils are prepared for life beyond school through their residential trip and life skills sessions, where they learn a variety of skills, including how to keep themselves safe and respond in an emergency.

Pupils learn how to reflect on their beliefs and behaviours. For example, they learn to consider the impact of their actions on others in the school's reflection room. They say that this helps them make more positive choices in the future. The school's Christian ethos underpins much of this work. Pupils enjoy termly visits to the local church, acting as buddies to younger pupils when they walk there. Pupils take on a range of other leadership roles, such as librarians and democratically elected house representatives. Pupils contribute to their wider community, supporting the local food bank and putting on choir performances in a care home.

Pupils typically remember what they have learned from their personal, social and health education lessons and about fundamental British values. They mostly develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and the dangers of drugs and alcohol, for example.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils are well cared for. Pupils who need additional support receive this.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 is below the national average, with fewer than half reaching the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics in 2025. This means too many pupils start secondary school with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address this. They continue to monitor the impact of their work. There are areas where pupils achieve more highly. For example, pupils in Year 4 achieve well in the multiplication tables check and most pupils in Year 1 pass the phonics screening test. Children in the early years achieve well and make progress from their starting points. Staff are quick to address any gaps in children's knowledge in Nursery and Reception. This is also true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make progress from their starting points both in terms of their personal and social development, as well as academically.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

While most pupils have high attendance, there remains a minority who are persistently absent. Leaders have worked hard with pupils and families to ensure pupils attend more regularly, and this has had a positive impact on some pupils. Leaders understand the barriers pupils face and they provide support to help pupils overcome barriers. This work is ongoing. Overall attendance is below the national average, but this has also been affected by the number of suspensions in the school this academic year.

Overall, pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved, but pupils, staff and parents still have some concerns about pupils' conduct. Learning is disrupted less frequently because staffing is now more stable. The trust has supported leaders to raise expectations and take robust action to improve the behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils who continue to disrupt learning and play times. This has resulted in an increase in the number of suspensions. Leaders have put in place additional support and made reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is starting to have a positive impact on these pupils, and the attitudes and experiences of other pupils. Pupils understand the school rules and routines and typically follow these, particularly in the early years. Bullying and discrimination are not tolerated.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The school has experienced instability in staffing that has impacted the quality of teaching across the school. This is now improving, but leaders know there is work to do to improve how well the curriculum is taught. They have prioritised filling gaps in pupils' mathematics and writing knowledge, while maintaining a focus on reading. The trust has supported the school to deliver a more robust writing curriculum that secures pupils' transcription skills. This is starting to have a positive impact, especially for younger pupils and those in Reception. The trust has also provided additional support for staff to deliver phonics effectively to children in Reception and Year 1, and older pupils who need to catch up with their reading. Leaders have provided staff with clearer guidance and resources to support them in their teaching of mathematics, which is helping pupils develop fluency and approach problem solving and reasoning with greater confidence.

However, across the curriculum, including subjects such as science and the humanities, the work pupils are given does not always enable them to deepen or demonstrate their knowledge. Staff do not consistently check pupils' understanding, so do not always address misconceptions, or provide opportunities for high prior attaining pupils to extend their learning. Typically, the curriculum is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

It has been a turbulent time for the school. There have been a number of staffing changes and these have undoubtedly had a negative impact on pupils, in particular on their behaviour. The quality of teaching has also been inconsistent, which has in turn impacted pupils' achievement. The trust has provided significant support to the school during this time

and leadership is now more stable. Leaders have prioritised the right things in order to drive improvement where needed.

Trustees and governors know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties. For example, they have a secure oversight of attendance, pupil premium funding and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have ensured that safer recruitment practices meet the requirements of statutory guidance. Trustees and governors continue to provide robust challenge and support to the school during what has been a challenging time.

Staff typically feel well supported by leaders, while acknowledging that workload has increased. They understand the need to rapidly and robustly make changes in some areas of the school. Leaders in the school and trust support staff's professional learning through networks and access to qualifications. This helps staff develop the subject and teaching expertise needed.

Leaders recognise the need to rebuild the trust and confidence of some parents. They are open and transparent, providing opportunities for parents to feed back and contribute to the ongoing improvement of the school.

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

The school has experienced a significant period of turbulence. This has had a negative impact on pupils' behaviour and achievement. Leaders have taken firm and decisive action to address weaknesses in teaching and tackle disruptive behaviour. There are signs of improvement. This is helping pupils to enjoy their learning. Pupils feel safe at school. They have trusted adults to turn to if they need help or support. They have confidence that staff will help them resolve any issues related to unkind behaviour. Bullying is rare.

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum. However, currently, this is not being delivered consistently effectively. Too many pupils have not met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This means that pupils do not develop detailed knowledge in subjects such as geography, history and religious studies. Leaders have rightly addressed weaknesses in the mathematics and writing curriculums and, most of the time, pupils are now learning more effectively in these areas and starting to fill gaps in their knowledge. Children benefit from effective phonics teaching and get off to a strong start in the early years.

Staff successfully promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy spending time in the library reading from a range of carefully selected books which are matched to their interests and abilities. This is a strength of the school, alongside carefully planned trips and workshops which complement the curriculum. Pupils value the school's outdoor spaces and opportunities to play with their friends. They enjoy a range of clubs and activities. Pupils understand the school's vision to 'let your light shine'.

Most pupils attend well, although work is ongoing to ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent reduces.

Next steps

- Leaders must continue to robustly monitor the impact of the writing curriculum, addressing weaknesses in practice, so that all pupils improve their writing fluency and accuracy.
 - Leaders must ensure that the work pupils are given, including in wider curriculum subjects, enables them to deepen their thinking and develop a detailed knowledge across the curriculum.
 - Leaders must ensure that teachers use assessment effectively in lessons to identify when pupils have misconceptions, and when pupils need to extend their knowledge, so that pupils complete work that is matched to their needs.
 - Leaders must maintain high expectations for all pupils' behaviour, so that the poor behaviour of a minority does not have a negative impact on others.
 - Leaders must ensure that all aspects of the personal development curriculum are implemented effectively, so that pupils consistently remember what they have learned.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Leaf 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), Ross Newman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Simmons-Bird.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and groups of staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with the CEO, the trust's school improvement partner, and chairs and other members of the local governing board and board of trustees.

The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Bristol.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a religious character. It is in the Diocese of Bristol. The predecessor school's last section 48 inspection took place in April 2019, before the school joined The Leaf Trust in September 2023.

The school makes use of 3 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Sarah Sheppard

Lead inspector:

Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Diana Pearce, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Hansen, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

231

Close to 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

240

Close to 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)

14.29%

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

4.33%

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

11.69%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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 (final)	46%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	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 (final)	61%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	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 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
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 (final)	61%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	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 (final)	43%	47%	Close to average

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)	57%	63%	Close to average
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)	71%	59%	Above
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)	57%	61%	Close to average
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)	43%	69%	-26 pp
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)	57%	81%	-24 pp
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)	71%	78%	-7 pp
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)	57%	81%	-23 pp
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)	5.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	15.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	14.6%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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