

# St John's Church of England Primary School

**Address:** Poplar Street, SK4 3DG

**Unique reference number (URN):** 106105

## 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.

## Strong standard ●

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development offer is extensive. It is tailored thoughtfully to pupils' needs. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other barriers, demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of equality. This includes knowledge of the protected characteristics. Pupils welcome everyone to their school warmly, regardless of their background. They learn about different faiths and cultures, which supports their understanding of the fundamental British values.

Pupils build their confidence and independence through charity work, community engagement activities and leadership roles such as school councillors and buddies. Pupils plan and organise events independently, including fundraising activities. They participate in aspirations week, where Year 6 pupils write CVs and meet visitors from different professions. These experiences help pupils become confident, resilient and well prepared for life beyond school.

Pupils demonstrate the essential knowledge they need to stay physically and mentally healthy and to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They show clear awareness of how to sustain positive relationships and how to recognise when this is not the case. Pupils understand how to manage aspects of their own safety, both online and in the community. They feel confident that they know how to seek help if they have concerns. Leaders and staff understand their pupils and families deeply and provide highly effective pastoral support, particularly for those who are vulnerable.

Pupils, including those with SEND and those who are vulnerable in other ways, take full advantage of the wide range of opportunities and experiences on offer. For example, they attend clubs such as those for sewing, coding, and American football. Pupils undertake visits planned into the curriculum to bring learning to life, such as to Chester during their Romans topic. Those in key stage 2 go on regular residential trips which they enjoy. These opportunities extend pupils' learning and nurture their talents and interests.

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## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well in subjects across the curriculum. From the early years to Year 6, pupils speak confidently about what they are learning. Older pupils make links to their prior learning, for example when exploring themes across history and geography.

Pupils make assured progress through the curriculum. Pupils with SEND progress appropriately from their starting points. Typically, pupils produce high-quality work.

In reading, writing, and mathematics, pupils' outcomes in national tests at the end of key stage 2 are often above the national average. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next

stage of education. Nevertheless, some key skills which pupils need, such as handwriting and spelling, are not being supported effectively enough. This compromises the quality of pupils' writing across the wider curriculum.

## Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' attendance at school. Pupils arrive at school happy each morning. Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers to ensure that families receive the support they need to reduce absence levels. The school secures a sense of belonging for all. The school's actions for improving attendance are effective. Leaders maintain high attendance rates and are successful in reducing absence for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff model and promote the behaviour they expect through positive relationships and clear routines. Leaders regularly update their behaviour policy to reflect this. Pupils are immersed in a culture of encouragement and optimism. The rules are applied effectively by staff. Pupils understand them and agree that they are fair. Any incidents of alleged bullying or discrimination are dealt with promptly and with sensitivity to those involved. Pupils define bullying accurately and say that it doesn't happen at this school.

Pupils typically show positive attitudes to their learning and participate fully in their lessons. A minority of pupils need reminders to do this. In these instances, leaders act quickly to minimise any disruption to teaching. Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. In discussion with adults and each other, pupils are friendly, polite, and engaging.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff foster a culture of high expectations, encouraging all pupils to reach their potential. Leaders design and deliver a curriculum which outlines the key knowledge that pupils should know. The curriculum includes clear end points for each year group that builds on prior learning. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular professional development so that they typically have the knowledge and confidence to teach the curriculum successfully. Staff check pupils' progress and understanding through the curriculum. This effectively guides their next steps in teaching.

On the whole, staff use precise explanations, modelling, and questioning to deliver the curriculum well. Pupils generally receive the teaching they need to secure essential knowledge in reading and mathematics. However, this is not as evident in some aspects of writing as it is in reading and mathematics, indicating that teaching in some areas of writing require a greater focus.

Staff deliver inclusive lessons that fully involve pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning. They make skilful adaptations to the curriculum to meet individual needs effectively. This includes supporting pupils who need to catch up quickly.

## Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have implemented a comprehensive curriculum that is delivered effectively by skilled staff in the Reception Year. In most areas, clear end points for children's learning are defined, and the sequence of learning is carefully planned to build knowledge and skills. From time to time, the clarity of these end points or the precision of sequencing is less secure. There is a clear focus on children developing essential language and communication skills. Speech and language screening takes place to pinpoint each child's areas of need. Staff model and repeat the language and important vocabulary they want children to learn through their interactions with them.

Staff generally teach the curriculum effectively, taking children's ages and stages of development into consideration. Children, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. A well-organised phonics programme is delivered throughout the Reception Year. Any children who find reading more difficult receive effective support to keep up and catch up with their peers. Most reach expected outcomes by the end of the Reception Year. Staff share this information with Year 1 teachers to ensure a smooth transition to key stage 1.

Staff form warm, nurturing relationships with children to ensure they feel safe, secure and happy. Staff build trusting connections with parents and carers from the outset. Both parties work together to support children's progress.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders know their pupils well. They identify the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who face other barriers to their learning, quickly and accurately. They pinpoint the individual needs of pupils and address these so that each pupil can thrive. This ensures that teaching and classroom environments are inclusive.

Leaders keep up to date with training and local partnership strategies. For example, their work on an oracy project with the local authority ensures communication and language development remain a focus in school. Leaders embed a clear pathway for supporting pupils with additional needs. They work closely with external agencies and specialists to establish the support required for each pupil. Trained staff then deliver this support effectively. On the whole, well-tailored adaptations enable pupils with SEND to succeed.

Leaders check the progress of pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding. Through the pupil premium strategy, staff implement targeted support that improves outcomes for these pupils and promotes equity across the school.

The inclusive culture across the school enables pupils who face barriers to learning to flourish academically and personally at St John's.

The last year has brought a period of change for the school, including to both leadership and governance. Through this transition, leaders have continued to model high expectations and professionalism. They are closely attuned to the life of the school, identifying and prioritising actions for improvement. Leaders, staff and governors are committed to ensuring that pupils benefit from a rich academic and personal development offer.

Staff are given meaningful opportunities to share their insights and collaborate as part of any changes made. They feel valued and heard. Staff undertake regular professional development. They say it is high quality, relevant and purposeful. Training is aligned to the ongoing school priorities. It provides staff with a breadth of opportunities, from leadership qualifications to classroom practice, and demonstrates a strong culture of professional growth. Staff welcome the consideration that leaders show of their workload and wellbeing.

Governors, although some are newly appointed, know their school community well. They have the knowledge and skills to carry out their statutory duties effectively. Governors have needed to take some difficult decisions recently that are in the best interests of pupils. Governors hold school leaders to account successfully for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Relationships with families are long-standing, open and supportive. Leaders and governors build constructive relationships with parents and carers, as well as the wider community, to foster trust and support pupils' achievement and sense of belonging.

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

Pupils are rightly proud to be part of this friendly and welcoming school. Members of the school community refer to it as a place 'full of love'. From the Reception Year to Year 6, pupils eagerly come into school in the morning. Staff nurture and care for pupils, knowing them well. This helps pupils feel safe and settled.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers, generally live up to or exceed these expectations. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff support pupils with barriers to learning effectively so they can succeed.

In lessons, pupils engage well in their learning. Child-friendly characters are used to remind pupils of behaviours for learning, for example taking responsibility and showing perseverance. Pupils speak confidently about what they are learning and how it links to what they have learned previously.

Pupils typically behave well. The school values underpin the expectation for respectful behaviour. Pupils learn to cooperate and reflect on their own and others' behaviours. Themed initiatives such as 'cool to be kind' week supports this learning. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of fundamental British values in the way they show empathy, tolerance and encouragement towards each other. They are friendly and courteous, and engage well with visitors.

St John's prioritises pupils' wellbeing and personal development as highly as their academic success. Pupils take full advantage of the wide array of enrichment opportunities woven through the curriculum. They take enormous pride in their regular musical shows and theatre performances. For example, members of the steel pan band speak enthusiastically about performing at local events.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers across all phases make informed and effective decisions about how and when to deliver and monitor writing content in the curriculum, so that pupils consistently experience the best possible learning.
  - Leaders should ensure that pupils secure strong foundations in spelling and handwriting, so they are consistently able to achieve greater accuracy and proficiency in their writing across all subjects.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Shahid Hussain.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff and members of the governing body during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character was in June 2024.

The school does not make any current use of any alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The previous headteacher left in September 2025. There is currently an acting headteacher in place. A new chair of governors was appointed in March 2024.

Acting Headteacher: Andrew Clerc

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### Lead inspector:

Ruth Moran, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Dymond, 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



**200**

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

**210**

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)

**8.50%**

Well 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

**1.50%**

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**

**12.00%**

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 | 78%         | 61%              | Above                          |
| 2024/25               | 81%         | 62%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24               | 90%         | 61%              | Above                          |

| Year    | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022/23 | 65%         | 60%              | Close to average               |

### 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 | 87%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| 2024/25               | 87%         | 75%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24               | 90%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| 2022/23               | 84%         | 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 | 84%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| 2024/25               | 84%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24               | 93%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| 2022/23               | 74%         | 71%              | Close to average               |

### 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 86%         | 73%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25</b>               | 87%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24</b>               | 90%         | 73%              | Above                          |
| <b>2022/23</b>               | 81%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 46%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25</b>               | S           | 47%              | S                              |
| <b>2023/24</b>               | S           | 46%              | S                              |
| <b>2022/23</b>               | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 71%         | 62%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25</b>               | S           | 63%              | S                              |

| Year    | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 | S           | 62%              | S                              |
| 2022/23 | 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 | 57%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25               | S           | 59%              | S                              |
| 2023/24               | S           | 58%              | S                              |
| 2022/23               | 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 | 57%         | 60%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25               | S           | 61%              | S                              |
| 2023/24               | S           | 59%              | S                              |
| 2022/23               | 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 | 57%         | 68%                              | -10 pp                  |
| 2024/25               | S           | 69%                              | S                       |
| 2023/24               | S           | 67%                              | S                       |
| 2022/23               | 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 | 71%         | 80%                              | -8 pp                   |
| 2024/25               | S           | 81%                              | S                       |
| 2023/24               | S           | 80%                              | S                       |
| 2022/23               | 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 | 57%         | 78%                              | -21 pp                  |
| 2024/25               | S           | 78%                              | S                       |
| 2023/24               | S           | 78%                              | S                       |
| 2022/23               | 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 | 57%         | 80%                              | -23 pp                  |
| 2024/25               | S           | 81%                              | S                       |
| 2023/24               | S           | 79%                              | S                       |
| 2022/23               | 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 (1 term) | 3.2%        | 5.1%             | Below                          |
| 2023/24          | 3.3%        | 5.5%             | Below                          |
| 2022/23          | 3.5%        | 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) | 5.8%        | 14.3%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24          | 5.7%        | 14.6%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23          | 8.2%        | 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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