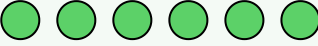


St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School

Address: Springwood View Close, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 2HR

Unique reference number (URN): 141545

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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' sustained efforts to strengthen attendance are having a clear impact. They keep a close eye on pupils' attendance patterns and act swiftly when any concerns arise. Staff work sensitively with families, taking time to understand the particular difficulties some pupils experience. As a result, leaders offer tailored support that helps pupils re-establish consistent routines. Overall attendance now sits broadly in line with national figures, and the number of pupils with high absence levels is steadily falling. Daily welcome routines help pupils feel a real sense of belonging from the moment they arrive. Those who need additional reassurance benefit from calm, nurturing support that helps them start the day settled and ready to learn.

Pupils behave well and show respect to one another. The school takes a caring and supportive approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Staff understand that behaviour is often linked to how a pupil feels. They respond calmly and consistently, while maintaining their high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This ensures that there is an inclusive and respectful ethos across school. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. Pupils say that bullying is rare. In lessons and during social times, pupils strive to earn 'gold' and 'ethic of excellence' awards in assemblies. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious across all subjects. They have ensured that the context of the school is considered so that pupils broaden their knowledge of diversity and widen their experiences. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have prioritised the teaching of reading and mathematics to improve standards. However, published outcomes at the end of Year 6 do not reflect leaders' recent strategic work which has impacted positively on teaching and learning.

Phonics is given the highest priority from the moment children enter the school in the early years. Children quickly learn their letters and sounds, and if they fall behind, they are well supported to catch up. Pupils secure their knowledge of writing and spelling through well-delivered lessons. The effective teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils have a firm understanding of arithmetic, which they then use to solve more complex mathematical problems. In a small number of subjects, however, the selected learning activities do not support pupils consistently to achieve as well as they could.

Leaders and staff keep a careful check on the progress pupils make and adapt their provision to fill any gaps. Leaders support teachers to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities very well.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children typically get off to a positive start in the early years and make good progress from their starting points. Staff know children and their families well and establish clear routines

that help children feel secure and ready to learn. Children's wellbeing is at the forefront of everything leaders do. Children are nurtured, cared for and well looked after. By the end of the Reception Year, children are ready for Year 1 both academically and socially.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is tailored to suit the needs of the children. Staff make effective use of the curriculum to ensure that children secure the key knowledge and skills needed for successful learning. They prioritise developing children's language, modelling vocabulary clearly and offering targeted support to build confident communication. Children learn the basics in reading and writing through daily phonics lessons. They develop a love of stories through the carefully chosen texts that drive each week's learning activities. However, staff do not use the learning environment in a way that fully promotes children's independent writing. Leaders are taking steps to ensure that staff organise and use the environment so that it supports children's learning as effectively as possible. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning receive bespoke support that helps them succeed at school. If they have gaps in their knowledge, staff ensure that children receive extra help to keep up or catch up.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

From the moment children start in the early years, leaders quickly assess and identify their needs. Staff follow a clear process so that emerging concerns are not missed. Leaders reduce pupils' barriers to learning through internal nurture and learning provisions. The recently established 'Stepping Stones' provision provides targeted and tailored support for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils benefit from expert staff who meet their needs well.

Leaders work with external professionals and agencies to tailor support for pupils, so that pupils' support plans are typically well designed. This includes work with the virtual school to help pupils known, or previously known, to social care. Staff have the expertise to implement support effectively. This is because leaders provide effective training and coaching, so support can be adapted to pupils' changing needs. As a result, pupils benefit from the right support at the right time.

The school's work to support pupils' wellbeing and mental health is valued greatly by pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' attendance and engagement in their learning. Leaders plan and monitor provision for disadvantaged pupils strategically. The pupil premium strategy focuses on improving pupils' outcomes, and actions are linked closely with the school priorities. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this additional funding on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those from the trust, know the school well. They understand what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They set clear reasons for their priorities and take suitable action to bring about improvement. Leaders are mindful of the school's context and the particular opportunities and challenges this brings. At the heart of the school is leaders' thoughtful attention to each pupil's unique circumstances and needs.

The trust is closely involved in the life of the school. Trust leaders have ongoing oversight of how well key areas are being addressed. Governors and trustees have a clear grasp of their statutory responsibilities and carry them out well. They understand the school's key priorities and offer leaders an effective balance of challenge and support to drive improvement. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive, while also considering staff workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Across all levels of governance, decisions are guided by what will most benefit pupils, especially those facing the greatest difficulties. Governors and trustees also ensure that financial choices, including the allocation of pupil premium funding, lead to positive support for pupils.

Professional development is planned well and clearly linked to school's priorities. Staff access high-quality training that leads to improved teaching and career progression. Parents and carers are typically supportive of the school's work. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders, governors and staff share the same ethos and ambition where every pupils is valued for who they are, and that they belong and thrive both academically and socially.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' personal development is supported through a broad range of experiences that promote their physical and mental wellbeing, enjoyment and social interaction. Leaders have carefully designed a personal development programme that provides pupils with a foundation for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop their understanding of a range of faiths and cultures, reflecting on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. They speak with respect when discussing difference and diversity and learn why some of these differences are protected against discrimination. Pupils show some understanding of important British values, although sometimes their understanding of these lacks depth.

The relationships curriculum helps pupils learn what healthy friendships look like and how to make sensible choices. Lessons about online safety teach pupils how to spot risks and what to do if something makes them uncomfortable. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of consent. The pastoral support of the school is a strength. The use of 'keeping in touch' sessions gives pupils safe ways to share their feelings. 'Queen bee' sessions and nurture support enable pupils to connect with others and develop their self-worth.

A wide range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, take part in after-school clubs that foster their talents and interests. Activities such as cheerleading, board games and 'mini making' crafts provide opportunities for pupils to try something new. Leaders monitor pupils' participation to ensure equity of access. Educational visits, including to historical sites, the seaside and theatres, promote pupils' curiosity. Residential trips build pupils' independence and teamwork through outdoor, adventurous experiences.

Pupils particularly enjoy the vast range of activities on offer during social times. From den-making and splashing in puddles, to building go-karts, there is something for everyone. Pupils develop their understanding of healthy risk-taking when playing in the 'rough and tumble' area. They benefit from reflection times when relaxing in the hammocks. The school's 'entitlement offer' ensures that pupils learn important life skills such as learning to swim and cooking a meal from scratch.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 is below where it should be for their age in reading and mathematics. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their next stages as they should be. Leaders are taking effective action to address this, and their work is bearing fruit in mathematics and reading.

Pupils secure the important knowledge they need in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Pupils' work demonstrates appropriate progress from their starting points. They talk with enthusiasm about their learning and can generally recall what they have learned previously. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who face other barriers to learning benefit from tailored support that helps them make progress against their targets. Across the curriculum, pupils' work shows that they are building their knowledge and skills progressively.

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

Pupils are happy and feel safe at this friendly, welcoming and nurturing Church of England school. They model the school's values of 'courage, love, honesty, respect and forgiveness'. Pupils feel a real sense of belonging here and are kind and accepting of one another. They behave well and say that bullying is rare and always dealt with.

Pupils enjoy their learning and access a broad, balanced and thoughtfully designed curriculum. Leaders have introduced positive changes to help pupils learn effectively. The new 'Stepping Stones' provision provides bespoke support for some pupils, enabling them to progress well from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning receive the academic, social and emotional support that they need to access their learning. The curriculum is enhanced by 'learning hooks' which ignite pupils' enthusiasm for finding out more about topics across a range of subjects. Pupils benefit from teachers' secure subject knowledge. However, pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 is below age-related expectations in reading and mathematics. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their next stages as they need to be.

Pupils, including children in the early years, attend well and settle quickly to their learning because they are well supported by caring staff. In the Reception Year, children swiftly grow in confidence to access indoor and outdoor learning tasks independently. There is a 'family feel' to this school. Staff, and Buzz, the school dog, greet pupils each morning with a cheery smile or a wag of the tail.

Pupils enjoy a range of activities designed to develop their resilience, independence and risk-taking. Playtime activities of climbing, exploring and building are pupils' particular favourites. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to contribute to school life and the wider

community, including the local church. These help pupils to build their understanding of empathy, compassion and responsibility.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their current strategies to secure rapid and sustained improvement in mathematics and reading are embedded across the school so that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are ready for key stage 3.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers' pedagogical choices support pupils consistently well so that pupils achieve as highly as possible.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff maximise the use of the learning environment in the early years, so that they promote and develop children's writing during independent learning activities.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the 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, 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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the academy improvement officers, trustees, governors and a range of staff 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 school was last inspected under section 48 in October 2017.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher:

Lead inspector:

Kirsty Norbury, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Ofsted Inspector

Steve Tague, 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**

207

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)

19.81%

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

1.45%

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

7.73%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	47%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	68%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	32%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	30%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
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	55%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
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	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	58%	Above
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	41%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
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	32%	68%	-36 pp
2024/25 (final)	30%	69%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
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	59%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	78%	-6 pp
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	41%	80%	-39 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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 (3 term)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	13.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	16.8%	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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