

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Address: St Nicholas Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3LP

Unique reference number (URN): 114543

Inspection report: 14 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.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a well-sequenced and ambitious early years' curriculum that secures strong foundations across all areas of learning. Continuous provision offers a broad range of high-quality opportunities, and staff use these effectively to promote sustained engagement and purposeful learning. Children achieve well from their starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development has been above national averages over time, and many children, including all this year, meet the expected standard in reading. Phonics is prioritised and taught effectively, with gaps identified and addressed promptly.

Staff interactions are consistently of high quality. Adults model language well and extend children's vocabulary through meaningful exchanges and well-timed interventions. Opportunities for learning are maximised throughout the day, including during routines such as snack time and lining up. As a result, children develop strong communication skills and collaborate confidently.

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is a strength. Children show care and consideration for others and demonstrate resilience and independence. The learning environment is calm, purposeful and engaging. Strong partnerships with parents support children's transition into Reception. Leaders also ensure a smooth transition into Year 1 by building on early identification of needs. Effective pastoral care and safeguarding practices ensure that children feel safe, valued and well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide a strong programme of personal development and wellbeing. They have designed a coherent and ambitious programme that is carefully sequenced and consistently implemented across the school. Leaders prioritise inclusion and ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full breadth of opportunities. As a result, pupils benefit from a rich and equitable offer that supports both their personal growth and emotional wellbeing. A particular highlight is the school's partnership work with schools in Uganda and Spain. These links involve every pupil of the school in projects that include a focus on sustainability to help the planet and cultural learning to prepare pupils as global citizens. These opportunities strengthen pupils' confidence, resilience and sense of responsibility. Pupils collaborate effectively and communicate their ideas with enthusiasm and an open mind.

The school promotes pupils' social and moral development well. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on issues such as respect, fairness and responsibility, and they show a mature understanding of diversity. Relationships education and personal, social, health and economic education are skilfully designed. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent, mental health and personal safety. They understand how to manage risks and can explain how to keep themselves safe in different contexts. Pupils also develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy, individual liberty, and mutual respect. They apply these principles confidently in discussions and in their daily interactions. This ensures a peaceful and harmonious community where a rich range of cultures, languages and faiths are celebrated.

Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly to their needs. Targeted support for emotional wellbeing ensures that pupils feel safe, valued and supported. Consequently, pupils develop strong character, show respect and compassion, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils achieve well from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. In the early stages, pupils develop secure foundational skills, particularly in phonics, reading and early communication. Teachers provide targeted support that enables pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly. This leads to accelerated progress for identified groups.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well. Leaders ensure that these pupils access the full curriculum and benefit from effective support and carefully considered adaptations. As a result, they make strong progress and, in many cases, attain highly compared with their peers nationally.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because they develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. Outcomes in published assessments are typically in line with or above national averages. Pupils produce high-quality work across the curriculum, including some accomplished art and writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have established high expectations for attendance. They maintain an accurate and detailed understanding of attendance, tracking patterns systematically for different groups. This enables timely and appropriate intervention. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the barriers faced by families and provide targeted support to address these effectively. As a result, overall attendance is broadly in line with national figures and rates of persistent absence have improved. However, persistent absence remains higher for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors recognise this and are taking appropriate strategic and pastoral action, but further work is required to reduce this difference.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and engage well in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful, contributing to a calm and purposeful environment. Behaviour is consistently focused and calm across classrooms and social times, with pupils collaborating well and managing transitions smoothly. Leaders have established clear expectations, which staff apply consistently. Pupils report that behaviour is managed fairly and that staff always address any of their worries. The school promotes a culture of inclusion and respect, where differences are valued. Incidents of bullying or prejudicial language are very rare and dealt with promptly and effectively. This results in a safe, compassionate and supportive environment for learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Teaching is typically effective across the school. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They use this insight to take appropriate action to bring about improvements. Leaders have constructed an ambitious and broad curriculum that provides pupils with the knowledge they need for their next steps. The curriculum is clearly designed and well sequenced across subjects and phases.

Leaders ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge required to implement the curriculum effectively. Teachers model language and vocabulary well, supporting pupils' spoken and written communication. As a result, pupils achieve well across the curriculum, including those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Assessment is used effectively, particularly in phonics, to identify gaps in learning. Pupils who fall behind receive timely support to help them catch up quickly.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They adapt teaching appropriately, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing barriers to learning. Adaptive strategies, such as scaffolding and targeted support, enable these pupils to access the curriculum successfully. However, teachers do not always address misconceptions or adapt tasks with enough precision in some lessons.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders foster an inclusive culture and identify pupils' needs in a timely and appropriate way, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known to, or previously known to, social care. Staff assess needs and implement suitable support to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Teachers typically design lesson activities that enable pupils to access learning, supported by adaptive teaching and targeted interventions. Some pupils benefit from pre-teaching to help them engage more confidently with new content.

Leaders use pupil premium funding appropriately. This supports disadvantaged pupils to make secure progress from their starting points and contributes to improving attendance and confidence. Pupils with SEND access appropriate support that enables them to access the curriculum. Staff draw on relevant training and, where needed, external expertise to meet pupils' needs effectively.

Provision for pupils known to social care is appropriate. Personal education plan identify suitable support and are reviewed regularly. Leaders work with parents and external agencies to support pupils who face additional barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders monitor provision and review its impact. They make adjustments where necessary to improve outcomes. This work leads to steady improvements in pupils' confidence, wellbeing and academic success.

Leaders provide compassionate, dedicated and ambitious strategic leadership and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have identified appropriate priorities for improvement and take actions that are in the best interests of pupils. Since the previous inspection, leaders have secured great improvements, resulting in more consistent teaching and positive outcomes for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

Governors bring expertise, knowledge and strategic oversight to ensure effective support and challenge. Governors meet their statutory duties well. They have a suitable understanding of the school's performance and contribute to setting the direction for improvement. Leaders and governors give appropriate consideration to staff wellbeing and workload. Staff report positively about the support they receive, and leaders take steps to manage workload sensibly. Professional learning is prioritised, and staff benefit from a suitable range of training opportunities that develop their expertise, particularly in relation to inclusion and adaptive teaching.

Leaders engage positively with parents, professionals and the wider community. Parents and carers speak very highly of the school, with many commending the caring and inclusive ethos of leaders and staff. Leaders also work constructively with external partners to support improvement. Leaders have secured important improvements and rightly prioritise ensuring consistently high-quality teaching while continuing to tackle persistent absence.

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

Pupils flourish in this caring and inclusive school, where leaders and staff create a culture of welcome and respect. Pupils celebrate diversity and value opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures. Staff celebrate pupils' individuality and ensure that all pupils feel included in daily school life. As a result, pupils build strong, positive relationships with their peers and with staff. They contribute confidently to the life of the school and take pride in upholding its values of wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum and demonstrate a genuine enjoyment of learning. They engage positively in lessons and show enthusiasm and resilience. Teaching supports pupils to build secure knowledge and skills, preparing them well for their next steps. Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well because leaders identify and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing effectively. Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. A wide range of leadership opportunities and extracurricular experiences broadens pupils' horizons and enriches their learning beyond the academic curriculum.

Pupils thrive in a calm, purposeful environment. They behave well in lessons and around the school, showing kindness, respect and understanding towards others. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that staff deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. They feel safe and trust adults to support them. Pupils attend school well, reflecting their positive attitudes and sense of belonging. Leaders' focused work to reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, is having clear impact but continues to be a priority.

From the early years onwards, staff nurture and support pupils effectively. This strong start ensures that pupils develop the confidence, independence and readiness they need to succeed in the next stage of their education. Pupil leadership experiences and exciting wider opportunities such as global links in Uganda and Spain enrich pupils' lives as part of the school's excellent personal development and wellbeing programme.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching activities are precisely designed and adapted to help all pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.
 - Leaders and governors should continue their efforts to reduce persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Andrew Collin.

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, deputy headteacher, SENDCo, teachers, support staff, governors, advisers from the local authority and diocese, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England (Aided) religious character. It is in the Diocese of Chichester and the school's most recent section 48 inspection was 13 January 2023.

The school currently does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Michelle Lord

Lead inspector:

Scott Reece, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paul Bateman, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Hilditch, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

175

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

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)

29.71%

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

4.00%

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

9.71%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	69%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	76%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	60%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	80%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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
Latest 3 year average	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	87%	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
Latest 3 year average	60%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	46%	Above
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	70%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	88%	62%	Above
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	70%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	78%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	78%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average
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	60%	68%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	67%	-5 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	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	88%	80%	8 pp

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	70%	78%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	78%	78%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	79%	-17 pp
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)	6.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.8%	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 (2 term)	22.0%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	13.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.8%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention

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

Urgent improvement

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

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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