

St Philip's CofE Aided Primary School

Address: 2 Vinery Way, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 3DR

Unique reference number (URN): 110840

Inspection report: 24 February 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 

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. They are happy to be in school. They achieve well and are suitably prepared for key stage 1. Leaders have established positive relationships with parents and carers to support children's transition into school and learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experiences.

The curriculum has been carefully designed and sets out what children should learn to be ready for Year 1. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. They teach phonics well. Children start to learn to read as soon as they enter the Reception Year and quickly improve the accuracy of their reading. Staff use conversation purposefully to help children practise applying what they have learned. The high-quality learning environment is designed so that there are opportunities for children to build their knowledge, both indoors and outdoors. Staff support children to explore, try new things and communicate clearly.

Staff establish good habits and positive attitudes to school. Children quickly settle and become familiar with the school's established routines. They reinforce these important messages to one another in their play. For instance, some children act out taking the register outdoors and remind others to not be late for school.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise inclusion. They work closely with staff to implement their vision and have created an effective specialist inclusion team. Leaders' recent systematic review of pupils' achievement identified that some had significant gaps in their knowledge. Leaders recognised that teaching had not previously been adapted well enough to ensure that all pupils could access the curriculum. Leaders have put in place additional support to help pupils close those gaps and have brought about improvements in teaching.

Leaders now identify pupils' emerging needs quickly. They work with staff to ensure that pupils who face barriers to their learning typically benefit from effective personalised strategies and support, for example 'grab and go bags' in each class that contain specialist resources and scripts to support consistent and helpful communication. Leaders provide training so that staff have a clear understanding of how to implement these strategies. They review how well staff use agreed approaches and the impact of strategies on pupils' achievement.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers, as well as seeking advice from specialist services and social care, when necessary. They use additional funding well. This ensures that barriers for disadvantaged pupils are removed. Leaders take every opportunity to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have what they need to play an active part in school life.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has experienced a period of instability following significant and unexpected changes in staffing and leadership since the last inspection. Governors work closely with

wider partners and the local authority. They act on the advice they receive and have therefore halted a decline in standards and protected staff wellbeing.

A passionate, knowledgeable and enthusiastic leadership team is in place. It has correctly identified the key priorities for improvement. While mindful of the need to make rapid improvement, leaders also ensure that any changes are built on strong foundations and embedded before moving on to the next important thing. They provide staff with the time and training to implement the changes they want to see. Leaders draw on external expertise to help them reflect on the strategies they want to implement and their impact.

Leaders promote high expectations for staff and pupils. They model these expectations consistently and with professionalism. This in turn is reflected in the determination of staff to improve outcomes for all pupils. In a short time, there have been many successes. These include changes to the identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the strategic oversight of safeguarding and improvements to the curriculum. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about these changes and the academic and emotional care that their children receive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school plans its approach to personal development and wellbeing coherently. It is based firmly on the school values. The curriculum enables pupils to revisit key themes and concepts, which strengthens their knowledge and understanding. Staff teach pupils how to look after their physical and mental health and help them take personal responsibility for their learning. Staff also teach pupils how to stay safe online and in the community.

Older pupils discuss sensitive issues with maturity and respect. Pupils develop an understanding of healthy relationships. They link the school values to fundamental British values and develop an age-appropriate understanding of people's different experiences, backgrounds and characteristics. They learn about democracy through meaningful opportunities to participate in elections, for example choosing the class book. Pupils also learn to explain their reasons for the choices they make and the difference between right and wrong. Leaders ensure that everyone, whatever their beliefs or background, feels that they belong. Pupils describe their school as inclusive.

The school celebrates the diversity of the community. Leaders ensure they adapt the curriculum and provide appropriate support to meet the diverse needs and experiences of pupils. Pupils share with pride what makes them unique, including their cultures and beliefs. Staff value pupils' contributions and help them to deepen their understanding of life in modern Britain.

All pupils in Year 6 take on important roles and responsibilities. They carry them out diligently. Pupils have opportunities to attend clubs and represent the school. Leaders plan trips and invite visitors into school to bring the curriculum to life and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school offers a range of clubs and checks pupils' participation rates. Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide bespoke pastoral support and to widen access. However, some pupils do not benefit as well as they

could from the school's offer of wider opportunities. Leaders have begun to analyse the reasons for this.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Outcomes in national tests at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics dipped significantly in 2025. Although outcomes in reading and mathematics for all pupils were close to national averages, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were significantly below. Leaders have taken steps to address weaknesses in pupils' writing and have transformed support for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have also refreshed their approach to teaching phonics to improve achievement. This work has not been in place for sufficient time to be reflected in national test outcomes.

In a range of subjects, pupils can recall the important knowledge that staff expect them to learn. However, pupils' writing does not consistently reflect the knowledge they demonstrate when talking about the topics they are studying.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders know that too many pupils are or have been persistently absent and missing school. As a result, they introduced a revised approach to improving attendance. This is starting to have an impact for some pupils, but it is too soon to fully understand the impact of these new measures. Staff work closely with families to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Daily and weekly checks are undertaken. Patterns in attendance and lateness are quickly identified. Pupils have bespoke plans to support them in overcoming specific barriers to attendance. The impact of this work can be seen in the improved attendance of some pupils, but this has not been sustained over time.

Leaders' high expectations and clearly implemented systems result in pupils behaving well. Staff use school systems effectively and consistently. They teach pupils about how to live out the school's values and demonstrate respect for one another and adults. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils settle to their learning quickly. They are encouraged to reflect and learn from their mistakes. Classrooms are positive learning spaces where children care for their learning environment and use the resources appropriately. Children wait for adults to go through doors, and they eagerly greet visitors to the school. They talk about their work with confidence.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to develop the important knowledge they need in English and mathematics. At times, pupils do not receive helpful guidance and support to develop the accuracy of their reading or the clarity of their

writing. In some other subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils learn the key vocabulary that they need to understand and explain their learning. This hinders the progress that pupils make. However, leaders now have an accurate view of curriculum strengths. They have identified areas for development and have begun to bring about improvements.

Last year, leaders introduced a new and ambitious curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum sets out what pupils should learn and when. It provides opportunities for pupils to address gaps in their knowledge. Staff have benefited from training that has enhanced their subject knowledge and improved their teaching practice. They adapt their teaching so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils can better develop their understanding.

Leaders have improved the teaching of phonics, including by retraining staff. Teachers from the early years through to Year 6 now ensure that children who need extra help and those new to English receive the support that they need to close the gaps in their phonics knowledge.

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

Pupils at St Philip's recognise the positive recent changes to their school. They are proud to have roles and responsibilities that help them to contribute to school life and help make the improvements they want to see. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. They understand the importance of service to their community and know they make a difference. Pupils talk confidently and communicate effectively in a range of situations. They demonstrate care and consideration for others. This starts in the early years. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school and learning. Their behaviour in and around the school is appropriate. Children know, understand and apply the school values in their conduct and behaviour. Children understand the importance of attending school regularly. Leaders work closely with families to improve attendance. However, some pupils still miss school too often. Pupils say that children are kind to each other here. Staff will always help them if there is a problem. Pupils know what bullying is, but report that unkind behaviour is extremely rare. Pupils demonstrate empathy and understanding. They learn how to look after themselves and stay safe, as well as the importance of maintaining their physical health. Staff support pupils to reflect on their emotional wellbeing and understand their feelings. School residentials and visits from specialists enhance pupils' experiences and help make learning memorable.

Pupils benefit from a new and ambitious curriculum. Improvements in teaching have helped pupils to know and remember more. All pupils now benefit from appropriate support, adaptations and focused teaching to overcome barriers and make progress from their starting points. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They have not previously benefited from the high expectations now in place. Some pupils have not always achieved as well as they could.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to implement their attendance strategy to improve pupils' attendance so all pupils benefit from what the school has to offer.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen staff expertise and ensure that teaching is consistently high quality so that the curriculum is implemented as intended.
 - Leaders should raise attainment in phonics and writing so that all children achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently support pupils who face barriers to their learning so that these pupils can learn as effectively as possible.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dr Seb Falk.

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.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in January 2023.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Since the previous inspection in November 2021, the school has been through a period of significant changes in leadership. The headteacher took up the interim post in September 2025 and was appointed to the role permanently in February 2026.

Headteacher: Clare Hetherington

Lead inspector:

Oriana Dalton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lesley Stevens, Ofsted Inspector

Matt O'Grady, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

227

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

315

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)

31.72%

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

2.20%

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

14.54%

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

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	50%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	26%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	72%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	34%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Close to average
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	71%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	8%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	44%	Close to average

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	48%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	42%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

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	38%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	8%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	47%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average

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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average

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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	8%	69%	-61 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	67%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-20 pp

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	48%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	80%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	78%	-32 pp

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	38%	78%	-40 pp
2024/25 (revised)	8%	78%	-70 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	78%	-31 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	77%	-24 pp

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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	58%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	79%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	79%	-26 pp

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)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.2%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.4%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	15.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	28.1%	16.2%	Above

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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