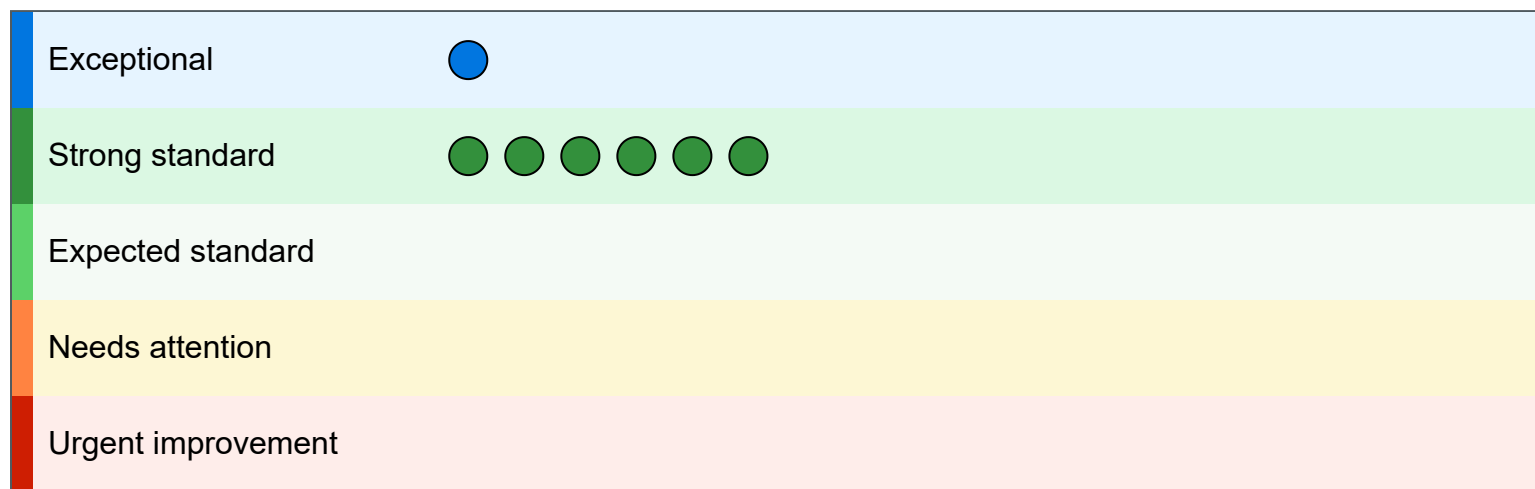


Adisham Church of England Primary School

Address: The Street, CT3 3JW

Unique reference number (URN): 141308

Inspection report: 25 November 2025



✔ **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.

Exceptional

Inclusion

Exceptional 

The school is known locally and nationally for the positive impact it has on its most vulnerable pupils. Leaders have well-embedded systems and processes for identifying pupils' needs. Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to address barriers to pupils' achievement and wellbeing throughout the daily life of the school.

Staff are experts in designing strategies and resources to help pupils overcome the obstacles they may face. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care.

Leaders and staff monitor pupils' progress meticulously. If any pupil finds learning or behaviour difficult, staff change their approach to give pupils the resources and strategies that they need to succeed. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging in school and exhibit pride in their achievements. The school works effectively with external professionals to make sure that pupils and their families get the right help.

As pupils progress through the school, they are taught to recognise when they need adaptations, and use resources and technology that support their learning and wellbeing independently. This prepares pupils very well for the next stage in their education.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils achieve highly in this school.

Right from the time that children start in the early years, they are deliberately taught the foundational knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics and communication that they need to access the curriculum. Pupils are helped to overcome gaps in their knowledge so that they progress well through the curriculum from their various starting points. Pupils' work is of a high quality across a range of curriculum subjects. Over time, pupils' success in the Year 1 phonics check and their attainment at the end of Year 6 are above the national averages.

Pupils enjoy learning subject-specific, technical vocabulary and using it in discussions about their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities use specialist resources to demonstrate that they are learning the curriculum well.

Pupils, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, are ready for their next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are high right from the start of the Reception Year to the end of Year 6. The school has well-embedded routines and expectations for behaviour which are clearly understood by all. Pupils show a high degree of respect for staff, who act as excellent role models for positive behaviour.

Pupils have consistently positive attitudes to their learning. They engage in lessons enthusiastically and show high levels of independence while learning. Pupils work collaboratively with their peers and contribute to discussions with confidence. At social times, pupils play cooperatively. Bullying is extremely rare, but if it happens staff deal with incidents quickly and effectively.

Pupils who struggle with their behaviour are expertly supported to understand their emotions. They are taught how to manage their feelings through self-regulation and reflection.

Pupils feel welcome at school and their attendance rates are high and consistently above the national average. This is due to leaders' highly effective work in reducing the barriers that stop some pupils from coming to school regularly.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed an inclusive, ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum, which has a strong focus on language development. The most important knowledge that pupils need to understand is clearly identified and sequenced in a logical order. Pupils gain the foundational knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. As soon as they start in the Reception class, they begin to learn phonics. Pupils learn to read securely. Any pupil at risk of not keeping up with the phonics programme gets the support that they need to catch up.

The curriculum is taught very well. Staff have excellent subject knowledge. They understand pupils' starting points and they are skilled at adapting their teaching and resources to support pupils. Staff check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions quickly. The school expertly supports any pupils who may fall behind in the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities especially benefit from this approach. Pupils learn in detail across the curriculum. Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of the curriculum and teaching on pupils' progress. Their meticulous analysis means that they make astute decisions and purposeful changes to the design and delivery of the curriculum when needed.

Early years

Strong standard 

Highly effective partnerships with parents and carers support the successful transition of children into the Reception class. Staff are experts in early childhood development. The curriculum is carefully designed so that children master the foundational skills and knowledge that they need to access the whole curriculum. Staff get to know children well.

They identify any barriers to learning and provide highly effective support for those that need it. Any children at risk of falling behind in the curriculum catch up quickly.

The curriculum is taught well. Activities are designed to support children's learning. Staff play alongside children, helping them to learn the curriculum through their interests. Staff focus on children's language and mathematical development. They help them to understand and remember technical vocabulary so that children can apply it in discussions about their learning.

The environment supports children's learning excellently. It provides intentional equipment for children to develop the strength and dexterity they need to master pencil grip, use scissors and manipulate resources. There are opportunities to enjoy books and practise early phonics skills throughout the indoor and outdoor classrooms. Children quickly master phonics and are proud of their success as they begin to read and write with confidence. Disadvantaged children, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, get the support they need to thrive. Children are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and trustees actively promote high expectations and are excellent professional role models. They review their actions systematically and analyse the impact of their work. This rigorous analysis helps leaders to make informed decisions about how to secure continual improvements to pupils' achievement and wellbeing. The positive impact of leaders' actions is evident in the precision with which every pupil's academic and personal needs are met and the successful inclusion of the most vulnerable pupils. The school shares much of its work on inclusion and attendance within trust schools, the local authority and with other schools nationally.

Leaders have policies and practices which actively promote positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents' and staff's views are considered carefully by leaders, who take the right action to further improve the experience of pupils, staff and families. Everyone feels valued and knows that their voices are heard. The provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally well tailored to their needs.

The school works seamlessly with the trust to provide high-quality training for all staff. Staff have a deep level of subject knowledge. Continuous coaching and mentoring is provided by the school and the trust. Staff are unanimous in their support for the school and the wider trust. They are proud of the shared vision for inclusion and their collective work which makes a positive difference to pupils' lives.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development programme is broad and set out coherently. The school's context and pupils' needs are reviewed and carefully woven through the programme.

All pupils benefit extensively from the school's personal development programme. Vulnerable pupils' participation in all the school's provision is tracked very carefully. Leaders

organise specifically targeted opportunities for groups of pupils to learn about specific areas of the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Pupils learn how to respect themselves, form positive relationships and stay healthy through the school's effective relationships and health education programme.

Pupils' talents and interests are developed systematically and effectively. For example, the school council attended a Parliament day and Members of Parliament have visited the school. There are termly career days and many visitors come in to talk about their own careers to develop pupils' aspirations and broaden their experiences further. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills through roles of responsibility such as play leaders. A broad range of clubs, and participation in the police cadets and choral concerts, help pupils to develop new interests.

Leaders develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and beliefs through the curriculum. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and understand the importance of showing respect for the differences between themselves and others. They apply the school values to issues such as how to treat each other when communicating on the internet. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They have a secure understanding of healthy relationships and how their bodies change as they get older. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life in modern Britain.

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

Pupils arrive to a warm welcome every morning and get off to a great start to their day. Regular wellbeing checks enable staff to provide just the right support for any pupils who might need it. As a result, pupils feel secure. They have a deep sense of belonging at this school. They thrive academically and in their personal development.

The school has honed, over time, a well established and highly effective curriculum and successful approaches to teaching. This begins at the start of school, as children transition into the Reception class. Staff build positive relationships with children and their families. At the earliest opportunity, the school forms an accurate understanding of children's starting points. Staff swiftly identify any barriers that children may face. Staff have expert subject knowledge. They teach the curriculum consistently well. Pupils build a secure understanding of reading, writing and mathematics. This means that pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve highly from their starting points.

Every aspect of school life, from the environment to daily routines, is designed so that every pupil can overcome any barriers to learning or wellbeing. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to overcome any barriers independently. They choose resources, environments and technology which support their learning and wellbeing extraordinarily well. Every aspect of the school is inclusive. Its impact on pupils is transformational. All pupils, especially those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy school. They focus on their learning well. Classrooms buzz with excitement as pupils engage in lessons enthusiastically. Bullying is not tolerated. Attendance levels exceed the national average. If any pupil's attendance falls below the school's exacting standards, leaders provide personalised pastoral care and support to help each pupil and their families.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Stour 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, Rachael Howell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon O'Keefe.

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 trustees, the headteacher and school improvement partners during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a religious character. It is a Voluntary Aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2019.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Sophie Metcalf

Lead inspector:


Jo Brinkley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Neil Pilsworth, 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

102

Well 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

105

Well 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)

24.51%

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

5.88%

Above 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

19.61%

Above 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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25	75%	62%	Above
2023/24	62%	61%	Close to average
2022/23	89%	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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	85%	74%	Above
2022/23	89%	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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	89%	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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25	81%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	89%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23	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	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25	S	63%	S
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	33%	59%	Below
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	56%	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	33%	68%	-34 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	56%	80%	-24 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	33%	78%	-44 pp
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	56%	80%	-24 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)	4.1%	5.1%	Below
2023/24	5.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	4.0%	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 (1 term)	12.5%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	11.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	4.5%	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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