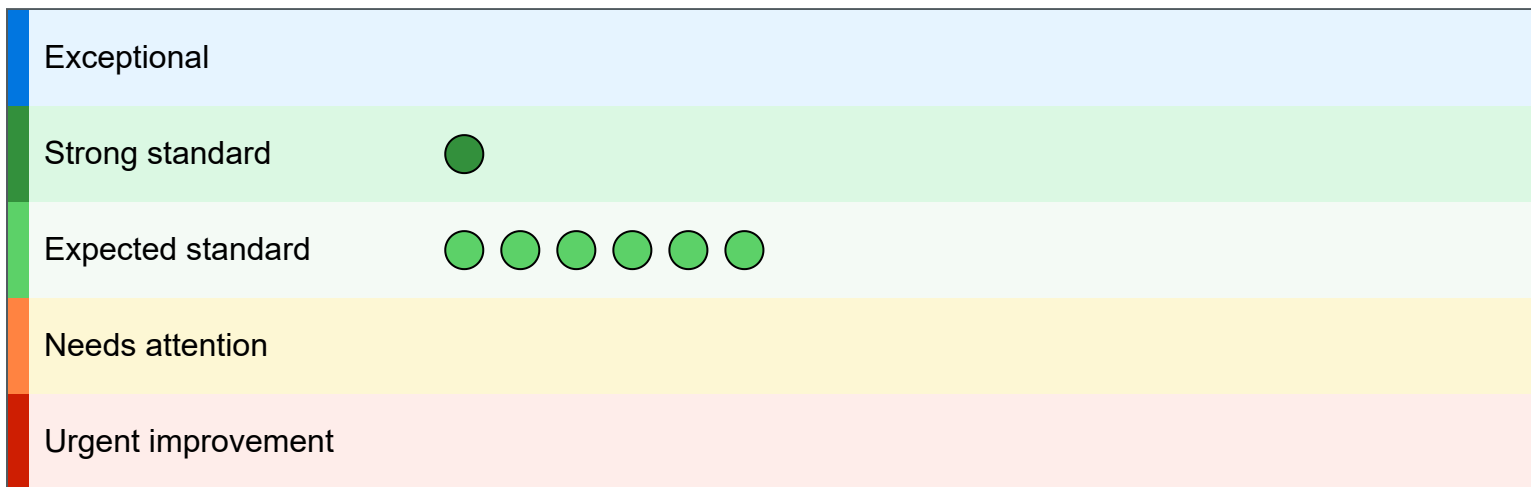


Haddenham St Mary's Church of England School

Address: Aston Road, HP17 8AF

Unique reference number (URN): 110446

Inspection report: 2 December 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.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are at the heart of this school. Pupils understand and model the school's values well, and they act in ways that reflect the school's caring ethos. For example, pupils are consistently kind and respectful towards each other, adults and the school environment. Pupils are taught the knowledge that they need for life in modern Britain, including respect and tolerance, in age-appropriate ways. They reflect thoughtfully about their choices and have a detailed understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils also develop detailed knowledge and skills about how to look after their health and wellbeing, including how to form and maintain healthy relationships. They learn about managing risks online and offline and how to maintain a healthy diet, for example.

Pupils, especially those that are disadvantaged, fully benefit from an excellent range of enrichment and curriculum opportunities that help to develop their talents and interests, such as specialist music provision and food technology lessons. They are excited to share their achievements in dance, singing, sports and music.

Pupils also relish being able to take part in local community events and celebrations. For example, the recent 'let there be light' week helped pupils to deepen their understanding of different religions and produce lanterns that reflected their work with local artists. Pupils are proud to engage in these opportunities and recall with delight how they took part in a parade to showcase their work to the school community. Pupils are able to strengthen their sense of belonging even further through the range of roles and responsibilities that they take up, such as being an 'eco councillor'.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Overall, pupils achieve well across the school. They learn the phonics curriculum securely, and this is also shown in the school's most recent published outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve positively. They develop the important knowledge that they need across the curriculum and are confident to answer questions and share their learning.

Generally, the quality of pupils' work across the curriculum is in line with expectations. However, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge and skills in their writing, such as spelling and punctuation, as well as they should.

In the early years, children make an effective start to their education. The focus on language and communication helps children to progress well through the curriculum and to develop

their confidence and independence. By the end of key stage 1, pupils have built up the knowledge and skills that they need for their next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders analyse and track absence patterns carefully. Where needed, they work closely with parents and carers to help pupils attend school frequently. Leaders know the barriers to pupils' attendance and take the right actions to tackle them. If any pupils are at risk of lower attendance, they receive thoughtful care and support to help them attend more frequently. Although disadvantaged pupils' attendance is below the national average, it has recently improved and continues to be a priority for leaders.

Right from the start of school life, children learn the school's routines and expectations extremely well. This helps to build a culture of care and respect throughout the school. Pupils understand why their behaviour is important. Positive relationships underpin the school's warm and supportive ethos. Staff understand and apply the school's behaviour policy well. Pupils who need extra help to adapt their behaviour receive the appropriate support. This enables them to meet the school's high expectations. Overall, the school is a nurturing environment where pupils are able to learn without disruption or discrimination.

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and enthusiastic. Playtimes are joyful. Pupils of all ages play together happily. They share equipment and encourage each other to engage in games.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They understand the strengths and areas for development in the quality of curriculum and teaching. They review and focus staff training appropriately to make improvements where needed. Learning is thoughtfully sequenced across the curriculum. This helps pupils to build their knowledge securely over time.

The school prioritises reading, right from the start of the early years. Pupils share a wide range of engaging and traditional texts, including fairy tales and stories from different cultures. This helps pupils to build up their knowledge and skills to access the curriculum.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this to design and implement the curriculum well across subjects. Staff generally share information clearly and check how well pupils have learned the curriculum to inform their teaching. If there are any gaps in pupils' knowledge, staff, on the whole, adjust the curriculum skilfully. This supports pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to engage in their learning. Sometimes, the support that pupils receive is not consistently of high quality, for example in relation to how well pupils develop their spelling, punctuation and handwriting and to help identify when pupils have developed misconceptions or made errors.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in early years make a positive start to their education. Typically, staff interact well with children and prioritise developing their language and communication skills. Sometimes staff do not take full advantage of opportunities to maximise children's learning.

The early years curriculum is ambitious for all children. Learning is sequenced well to help children develop the knowledge and skills that they need. Staff identify children's starting points effectively, including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Leaders work supportively with parents and carers. They build very positive relationships with families during the child's time in the early years.

Staff have a secure understanding of the school's phonics programme and teach it skilfully. Pupils are supported effectively to keep up with the phonics programme. Staff ensure that children get regular practice of their reading and writing throughout the curriculum.

Children seek help from adults if they cannot resolve a problem or when they have any worries, safe in the knowledge that staff will be caring and supportive. Across the early years, the curriculum helps children to begin to manage risk and grow in confidence from the start. Children enjoy the exciting learning environments that help them to develop increasing independence.

By the end of Reception Year, children are typically well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school's inclusive culture means that pupils feel welcomed and valued. Leaders have an accurate and secure oversight of the school's provision. They ensure that staff are well trained to identify pupils who may need extra support. The systems and procedures for identifying the specific barriers to learning that pupils may face are well established. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. This reflects leaders' determination to make a positive difference for vulnerable pupils.

Staff are trained effectively so that they can adapt learning appropriately. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers successfully. Some pupils need a more tailored offer. The offer for these pupils is well considered and based around their needs. There are clear processes for monitoring the impact of any additional support that is provided.

Pupils in receipt of pupil premium are well supported. Leaders have considered the barriers that these pupils face carefully and how best to reduce them. This includes working effectively with external agencies and using specialist advice. Overall, there is still some variation in how well some staff interact with vulnerable pupils to embed the school's inclusive practice.

Leaders, including governors, know the school's strengths and areas for development thoroughly. They take decisions that are in the best interests of pupils. There is a collective determination to strengthen the school community and make a positive difference to all pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable. For example, through the work of the on-site pre-school and the 'sapphire suite'. These have both been put in place to help meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.

There is a clear programme of staff professional learning that is grounded in the school's values and linked to the school development plan. Leaders prioritise staff being able to participate in regular training to enhance their subject and/or leadership expertise.

Governors are knowledgeable about their statutory duties. They offer a balance of support and challenge, including through how they review the impact of school policies. Their knowledge also helps them to include a focus on how well senior leaders support those children and families that need it most, such as in relation to pupils' attendance.

Leaders collectively support staff with their workload and wellbeing. For example, through the work of 'Team Sparkle', which was brought about as a result of the staff wellbeing survey. The school is a place where everyone feels welcome.

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

Overall, pupils achieve well. They feel safe and know that they are cared for deeply. Pupils look forward to coming to school. They are happy and enjoy their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support that will help them, for example in relation to their communication needs. Pupils also generally benefit from the adaptations to teaching and resources that will enable them to access their learning. Pupils are confident to take part in their lessons and are keen to show their work. They make appropriate progress from their starting points and are typically ready for their next stage of education.

Pupils demonstrate care and respect for each other. For example, they celebrate the school's values and approaches to behaviour, such as 'Daring Diamonds', by recognising curiosity and enthusiasm in each other and celebrating these qualities together in assemblies. Pupils learn about different backgrounds and beliefs. Staff share stories from different faiths to help pupils deepen their understanding of key themes across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the many broader experiences that are available to them, such as through dance and school performances. These help pupils to build their confidence and to develop respect for each other. Pupils are proud of their school. They develop a deep sense of belonging. Issues such as bullying are incredibly rare.

The curriculum is ambitious. Lessons are typically taught well so that pupils develop the knowledge and understanding they need as they move through the school. Sometimes, teaching does not help pupils as well as it should, such as in developing their writing skills.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. They know the school's 'sparkling rules' and what is expected of them. Pupils are kind to each other. Most pupils attend school regularly. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and staff. Pupils love their school and thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop their writing knowledge and skills across the curriculum, so that any gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge close securely.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff further develop how they check on pupils' understanding so that they can identify and correct pupils' errors and misconceptions more precisely and build pupils' knowledge and skills over time.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mrs Gaynor Bull.

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 governors, including the chair of governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority and spoke with pupils, parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Oxford. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in December 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Collett

Lead inspector:

Carl McCarthy, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Sara Staggs, His Majesty's Inspector

Katie Hancock, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

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

 This data is from 2 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

180

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

180

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

8.33%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.33%

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

6.67%

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

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).

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)	5.2%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.1%	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)	14.9%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	10.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	7.4%	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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