

Kilby St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Address: Main Street, LE18 3TD

Unique reference number (URN): 120195

Inspection report: 7 January 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 

Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have clear systems and processes in place. Leaders work closely with families, and appropriate support is offered when pupils do not arrive at school. Leaders use attendance information to intervene and support all pupils to attend well, including disadvantaged pupils. Although the attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been lower than other groups, it is improving over time.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. These expectations are communicated effectively to parents, staff and pupils. Leaders know and understand their pupils and the context of the school well. They support pupils and create a culture of positive behaviour. Staff have received appropriate training to support a consistent approach to behaviour management. They make appropriate adjustments to support pupils with SEND. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. However, at times, this is not reflected in the quality of the work they produce.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is positive. Leaders have established a calm, orderly and respectful environment. Pupils learn without disruption. Pupils say that bullying is rare and when it does happen, teachers help them. Leaders have created a culture where staff support and protect pupils.

Early years

Expected standard 

Early years provision is high quality. Developing early years has been a priority for leaders. They are ambitious to ensure that children have the very best start to their education. Leaders have a clear understanding of the context and starting points of children. They work effectively with parents and carers to ensure a smooth transition into school. All staff know the children very well.

The curriculum identifies the key knowledge that children will need to know and remember. It supports learning and progress. Learning is tailored to meet children's needs effectively. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive in early years. Children achieve well. They are ready for their next steps.

The school prioritises reading, and communication and language. It ensures that children develop the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics that they need to be good learners. Children practise what they have learned in early mathematics, for example, developing their understanding of numbers. Children enjoy story times.

Some adult interactions with children are of high quality and develop language and communication. Leaders need to continue this work to ensure that all staff engage in effective interactions with the children who need this the most.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff benefit from effective training to meet the ever-changing needs of pupils. As a result, the needs of pupils are identified and assessed effectively. Leaders ensure that individual learning plans are created for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In most cases, the targets set for pupils are precise and help teachers to better meet their needs. Leaders demonstrate knowledge of the graduated approach to supporting pupils. They work effectively with parents and external agencies to support pupils to achieve well.

In many lessons, pupils are supported to overcome the barriers to their learning. This is through adult support or teachers providing additional resources. Gaps in learning are identified and pupils are given the support to catch up with their peers. However, this is not consistently effective. Although leaders monitor pupils' progress to identify next steps, they do not currently check the impact of the support.

Staff know and understand the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. Leaders use funding effectively to ensure that pupils access the enrichment activities on offer and can overcome barriers to their learning. Pupils are fully included in the life of the school, for example through their leadership roles. Pupils say they feel 'responsible' and 'proud' in these roles.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school, the community and pupils well. Leaders identify the right priorities for improvement. They want to achieve the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils. They act in pupils' best interests.

Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the provision since the last inspection. An effective curriculum is now in place to support pupils' progress.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. They support and challenge school leaders effectively. They are fully aware of the quality and impact of different aspects of the school's work, for example the work to improve writing.

Leaders acknowledge the changing demographics of the school. They have responded appropriately to these changes. For example, they have developed processes and systems to ensure the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly identified and assessed.

Time is protected for professional learning. Staff access appropriate professional development. This helps them to deliver an improved quality of provision. The impact of this training is evident, for example, in understanding the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Staff appreciate how leaders are mindful of their wellbeing. Leaders ensure that their workload is manageable. Leaders collaborate in partnership with other local schools to share ideas and improve provision.

The personal development programme considers the context of the school. Leaders adapt the programme to reflect the school's context, for example through an increased focus on understanding diversity. The curriculum is well sequenced and ensures that pupils revisit learning to deeply embed their knowledge.

The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to learn how to keep physically and mentally healthy. It helps pupils to keep themselves safe when working online and when out in the community. Pupils talk about their learning with confidence. They demonstrate a depth of understanding of different cultures and world faiths. They learn about healthy relationships. Pupils understand the fundamental British values and how these align to the values of the school. They appreciate the need to treat all people with respect and celebrate differences.

Leaders ensure that pupils access the pastoral support that they need. Staff have received training to support their understanding of pupils' different emotions. The pastoral offer is effective and tailored to meet the needs of pupils. It ensures that pupils are in a strong position to access their learning.

Leaders acknowledge the restrictions to offering after-school activities. They look for opportunities to overcome these, for example through lunchtime activities and whole-school events. Pupils enjoy attending the lunchtime clubs, which help to develop their character. Pupils' talents and interests are developed, for example through a girls' football activity.

Pupils value their leadership roles. They take them seriously. For example, the school council is keen to raise money for a new sign for the 'Squirrel Lodge'.

Leaders create curriculum enrichment opportunities and check attendance to ensure that all groups of pupils are included. When necessary, leaders ensure that pupils have the additional support needed so that they can participate.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' work, including how pupils should present their work. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding when writing. This includes letter formation, sentence structure and when writing in other subjects. Gaps in pupils' knowledge when writing are not being identified effectively. As a result, these gaps are not closing.

Pupils across different year groups learn the intended curriculum. While many pupils talk about their learning confidently and progress through the curriculum, some do not progress as well as they should.

In some subjects, for example reading, pupils achieve well in national tests. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in reading and provide appropriate support to help pupils

to catch up. Leaders have implemented a new approach to teaching mathematics. As a result, pupils make suitable progress in this subject.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There are inconsistencies in how well teachers implement the curriculum. During some lessons, teachers routinely check how well pupils are learning. However, this is not consistent. At times, teaching is not adapted well enough to match what pupils know and can do so that pupils progress as they should.

In some classes, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. When this is effective, pupils progress well through the curriculum, for example when completing number activities with practical resources. However, this is not consistent.

Leaders understand the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have secured improvements in the teaching of reading and mathematics. Leaders have accurately identified the areas where teaching needs to improve. For example, they have introduced a new approach to writing. This is impacting positively on developing pupils' grammar and spelling. However, letter formation and handwriting are in need of improvement.

The school's curriculum identifies what pupils will learn. It is well sequenced and builds on what pupils have learned before. Teachers demonstrate effective subject knowledge across the curriculum. They give clear instructions and explanations. Teachers revisit prior learning to remind pupils what they have already learned.

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

Pupils enter school with big smiles. Staff and pupils are proud and happy to be part of this small school, which sits at the heart of the community. Pupils are welcomed into a calm, nurturing and friendly environment. Staff build warm and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils know that staff will listen to them if they have a concern. Pupils play and socialise well together. They report that incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from enrichment activities, including colouring club and the school choir. They enjoy their leadership roles, for example as a member of the school council or as a road safety officer. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They talk about what they have learned with confidence. Most pupils are prepared for the next stage of their learning. However, teachers do not check consistently what pupils are learning. As a result, the work for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not well matched to what they know. Leaders have identified that the development of writing is in its early stages. There is more work to be done to support letter formation and pupils' handwriting.

Pupils attend school well. They want to be there. Well-established routines and high expectations for behaviour lead to pupils learning in a calm environment. Many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, these positive attitudes are not reflected in the quality of written work that pupils produce.

In the early years, children get off to a positive start. They are happy, settled and they want to learn. The curriculum focuses on developing communication and language. Some staff demonstrate highly effective interactions with children. However, this is not consistent.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information to check what pupils already know, particularly when adapting learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning to improve all aspects of pupils' writing, including letter formation and handwriting.
 - Leaders should ensure that all teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including in the quality of the work that they produce.
 - Leaders should continue to develop high-quality interactions between adults and children in the early years.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is The Reverend Canon Philip O'Reilly, SSC.

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 the headteacher, the senior teacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, the chair and a selection of governors, and a range of teaching and non-teaching staff. They also spoke to a wide range of pupils throughout the school during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The latest section 48 inspection took place in June 2024.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

The school provides before- and after-school care.

Headteacher: Rebecca Hartshorne

Lead inspector:

Donna Chambers, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Mandy Wilding, 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 7 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

80

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

119

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)

5.00%

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

1.25%

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

11.25%

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).

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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	50%	62%	Below
2023/24	57%	61%	Close to average
2022/23	S	60%	S

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	100%	75%	Above
2023/24	57%	74%	Below
2022/23	S	73%	S

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	65%	72%	Below
2024/25	50%	72%	Below
2023/24	64%	72%	Below
2022/23	S	71%	S

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	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	63%	74%	Below
2023/24	64%	73%	Below
2022/23	S	73%	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

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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
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		62%	
2024/25		63%	
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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
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		78%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25		78%	
2023/24	S	78%	S
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
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 (2 terms)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24	4.9%	5.5%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23	3.9%	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 terms)	4.2%	13.3%	Below
2023/24	7.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	8.2%	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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