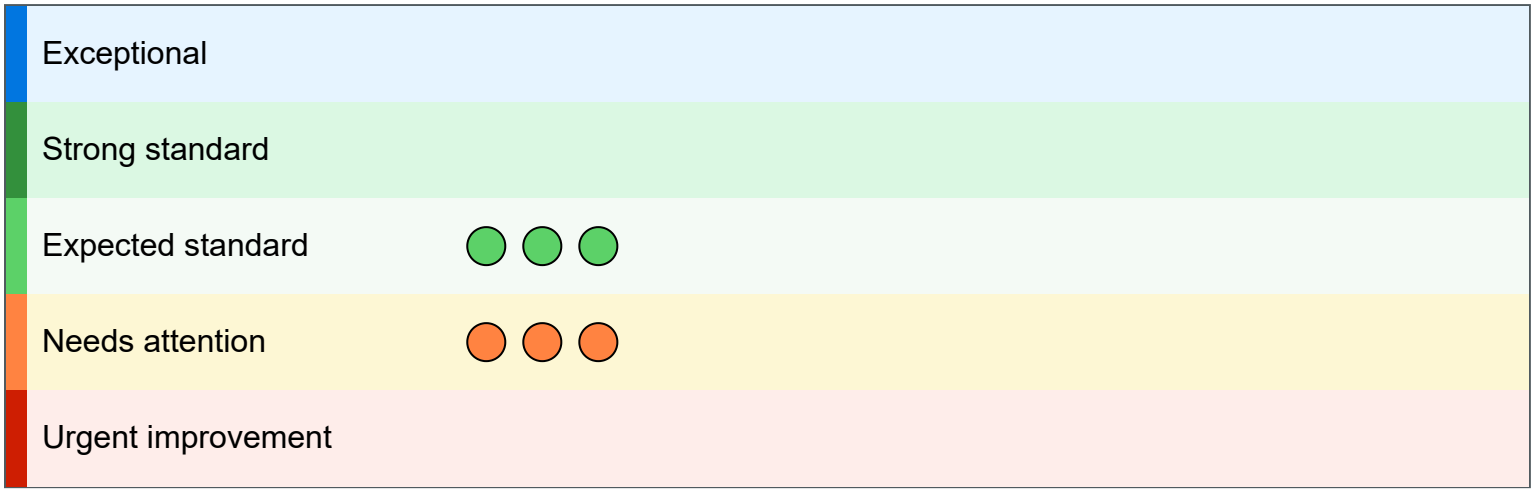
The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School

Address: Hampton Dene Road, Tupsley, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 1UU

Unique reference number (URN): 116991

Inspection report: 10 February 2026



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

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils' attainment in examinations has improved over the last two years. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils who have achieved better than their peers nationally in recent national tests.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects across the curriculum. For example, in science and in health studies, pupils flourish and do well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making suitable progress from their individual starting points by the time that they leave the school at the end of key stage 4. Pupils overall are well prepared for their next steps and gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

Some pupils' work in key stage 3 shows that they have gaps in their learning. The school has recognised this and has put effective steps in place to ensure that they catch up by the time they leave the school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Attendance at the school is a success story. The school rightly identified improving attendance as their 'number one priority', especially for pupils who are frequently absent. Leaders and staff consistently promote the importance of high attendance. The school carefully analyses trends and patterns in attendance figures, especially that of all groups of vulnerable pupils. It has deployed a number of effective strategies to improve attendance across the school. As result, attendance has improved significantly and is now at national averages. Far fewer pupils than nationally now have prolonged periods off school.

Pupils are friendly, welcoming and eloquent. They are proud of their school. The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils know what behaviours are expected of them and most display these consistently. While pupils and parents know the expectations, some do not understand the purpose of the new behaviour systems that have been put in place, which is evident in some parental feedback.

Pupils work hard in lessons and know that bullying is not tolerated. When some pupils may find it hard to behave well, staff work well to sort out any issues. This results in the school being a calm and nurturing learning environment.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school has designed a comprehensive personal development programme. There is a focus on educating all pupils so that they leave the school as well-rounded young adults. The school's 'Skills for Life' programme ensures pupils learn about the importance of respecting others and appreciating diversity. They speak knowledgeably about tolerance and equality. One summed it up when they said, 'It's totally OK here to be you.' Pupils understand the importance of healthy and appropriate relationships and how to look after their own safety and wellbeing in various scenarios, including online. Pupils develop their

leadership skills through activities such as being part of the school's leadership team or being an 'anti-bullying ambassador'.

The personal development offer is enhanced by visits to places of interest, residentials and activities that pupils keenly attend. Pupils are helped to discern right from wrong and are taught how to cooperate and communicate effectively. Pupils learn about different cultures as well respect and tolerance for faiths other than their own. The school's extra-curricular offer is broad and appropriate. Pupils and parents value the many opportunities to extend interests and talents beyond the classroom. Leaders analyse pupils' attendance to clubs to ensure they meet pupils' interests.

The school's careers education prepares pupils well for future education, employment or training. There is a focus on incorporating careers across the curriculum. Leaders take steps to ensure that all pupils, including those that may face barriers to their learning or wellbeing, can participate appropriately in the careers programme. As a result, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education, employment or training and move on to positive destinations.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders generally have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. They know that inconsistencies exist in the way they expect the curriculum to be taught. Recent improvement strategies have been implemented, but they have not had enough time to fully embed. As a result, variation in teaching exists, especially between key stages. For example, teaching is more effective in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.

The new curriculum in place ensures that pupils learn the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Generally, most pupils do and are well prepared for their next steps, despite the variability in teaching.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use appropriate resources in lessons. However, teachers do not effectively identify what gaps in knowledge pupils have. They are then not able to adapt their teaching to close these gaps. When this happens, pupils' work is of lower quality, especially in key stage 3.

The school's programme to support pupils' early literacy and numeracy knowledge is not as well developed as it could be. Leaders do not have a clear and effective system in place to monitor the impact on pupils' learning of any extra help that they receive.

Inclusion

Needs attention

The school identifies pupils who may need extra help well. There are clear procedures in place to ensure pupils' needs are identified. Staff generally receive clear guidance on how best to support pupils in lessons. The school has a shared approach to teaching with the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in mind. However,

this is not consistently implemented. This means that pupils typically do not receive the help they need in lessons to overcome their barriers. When this happens, their learning slows and pupils can fall behind. This is especially evident in key stage 3. Leaders do not carefully enough analyse how well pupils are supported in lessons. This means they are not able to intervene quickly. The school has not successfully engaged with some parents of pupils with SEND. As a result, they are negative about the help their child gets in school.

In key stage 4, the support pupils receive is more effective. The school's 'Bridge' provision is effective in ensuring that pupils who attend it can access their learning and do well.

The school uses additional funding appropriately to ensure all pupils have equal access to opportunities. Alternative provision is well matched to the needs and aspirations of the pupils who attend it.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

New leaders have brought about some key improvements in the school. For example, there is a new and more ambitious curriculum in place, attendance is much improved and there is greater stability in leadership after a period of turbulence. Many other new improvement initiatives have been introduced. While they are appropriate and are beginning to show positive signs, it is too soon to see leaders' desired impact across the school.

Leaders generally know their school well and have a clear understanding of what is working and what needs further attention. However, this strength is not consistent across all leadership areas. At times, limited strategic oversight and analysis affect leaders' ability to understand information fully and to share it effectively, including with governors.

Governors understand their roles and statutory responsibilities well. They have a clear, shared vision for their school. They generally receive the information they need to support leaders to make decisions in the best interests of all pupils. However, this is not consistent. At times, governors receive unhelpful information to effectively support and challenge the school. When this happens, governors do not have the full picture to ask the right questions.

Staff are proud of their school. They value the professional training they have had to improve their own practice. They state that leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing implications when they make decisions.

Parents' views, shared during the inspection, are mixed. Many value the pastoral care and the opportunities their children have. Others are not clear about the purpose of some of the changes that have happened and are negative about how these have been communicated to them.

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

Leaders have ambitious expectations, some of which make a real difference in practice. Examples of these are the school's broad and ambitious curriculum and impressive gains in

attendance. However, many strategies to improve aspects of provision further are new and it is too soon to see the impact of them across the school.

Pupils learn a curriculum that helps them build knowledge step by step. Teachers know their subjects and check pupils' understanding, but gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified or addressed quickly enough. The support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get varies. This means that pupils do not routinely and consistently receive the help they need in lessons to overcome their barriers to learning or wellbeing. This is especially the case for pupils in younger years. Overall, most pupils achieve well and are ready for their next stage in education. Disadvantaged pupils do particularly well compared to similar pupils nationally by the time they leave the school.

Pupils typically enjoy coming to school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Most pupils meet the high expectations of their conduct, which makes the school a calm and orderly learning environment. Pupils say that bullying occurs at times, but they are confident that staff deal with it well. They know that there is a member of staff they can talk to if they are worried about something. This helps them to feel safe in school.

Pupils have access to and engage in a broad range of enrichment activities that extend their learning and interests beyond the classroom. These include various sports clubs, visits and residential trips, such as the popular ski trip. Opportunities like being part of the 'Pupil Prefect Team' enable pupils to play an active role in the school. Careers education supports pupils to think carefully about their future aspirations. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

Next steps

- The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to support pupils in lessons to overcome their barriers to learning, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers accurately identify what pupils have learned and what gaps in knowledge exist, so that teachers routinely adapt their teaching to meet the different needs of pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, should make sure that all actions to improve the school are evaluated robustly in terms of the impact on pupils, based on accurate and helpful information.
- The school should improve its communication with parents so that all parents understand the reasons and implications of changes that are made to processes or expectations.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Morris.

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 the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders and staff at the school, including early career teachers. Inspectors held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and a call with the school's improvement partner. The lead inspector met with a group of members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.

Inspectors visited lessons. They looked at pupils' work. They spoke with pupils at different times across the school day and observed behaviour in lessons and around the school site.

To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses four registered and two unregistered alternative provisions for some of its pupils.

The school is a Church of England voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Hereford. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2025 and the next is due in 2030.

Headteacher: Tom Williams

Lead inspector:
Bianka Zemke, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
John Parr, Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Swindlehurst, Ofsted Inspector
Ezran Little, Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Lawson, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,091
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: 1,067

School capacity

1,130
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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

14.67%
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: 28.9%

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

3.12%
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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.11%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory

Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	46.8%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.1%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.7%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	45.9	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44.8	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.17	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.54	-0.03	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.5%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	22.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	23.3%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	44.2	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	30.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.9	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.87	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-1.23	-0.57	Below

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	37.5%	53.1%	-15.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	22.7%	53.1%	-30.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	23.3%	52.4%	-29.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	44.2	50.4	-6.2
2023/24 (final)	30.3	50.0	-19.7
2022/23 (final)	31.9	50.3	-18.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.87	0.16	-1.03
2022/23 (final)	-1.23	0.17	-1.40

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	96%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Average

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)	8.1%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.7%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	22.6%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	27.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	31.3%	26.5%	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.

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