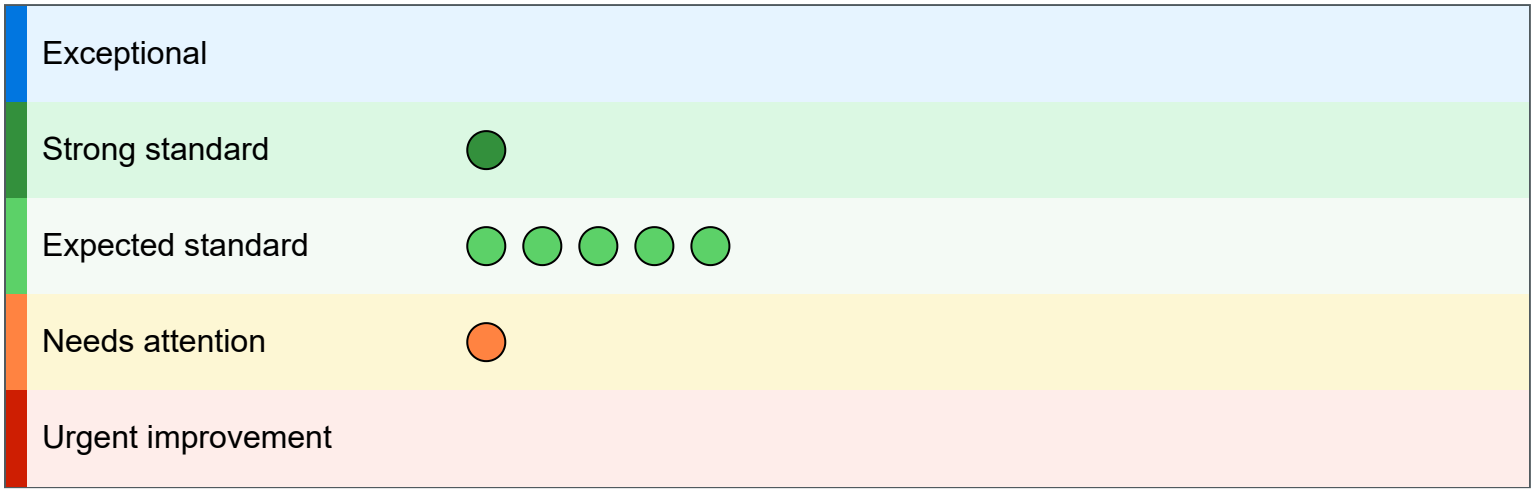
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

Address: Woden Road, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV10 0BB

Unique reference number (URN): 144251

Inspection report: 3 March 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.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders have set very high expectations of how regularly pupils should attend school. Leaders have detailed knowledge of the barriers and challenges that can sometimes prevent regular attendance. Staff make precise checks on pupils' attendance. Any absence is swiftly and rigorously followed up. A wide range of strategies to support pupils' attendance is firmly embedded. Pupils' attendance rates have been high over time.

Leaders have consistently high expectations of how pupils behave. Staff share these high expectations, which are quickly established as soon as pupils join the school. Behaviour expectations are adapted as necessary for pupils who need support. The environment is calm, and staff are supportive of all pupils. Pupils behave incredibly well. They are extremely polite, kind and considerate toward others. Pupils listen well in lessons and concentrate for extended periods. They demonstrate their thirst for knowledge and an eagerness to learn. During social times, pupils join in with well-organised sporting games and spend time with their friends. This is an extremely positive time during the school day. Bullying and discrimination rarely happen. When they do occur, they are not tolerated and are made to stop. Suspensions are used appropriately.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Across the curriculum, pupils learn the most important knowledge they need to develop a secure understanding of important concepts. Generally, pupils progress successfully through the curriculum. However, in some subjects, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. When this is the case, they do not produce consistently high-quality work across the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well across the curriculum. They are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils gain the skills and knowledge they need for future learning. Where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, these are closing quickly. Overall, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. Recently, the writing curriculum has been revised and improved. The curriculum is well designed so that knowledge is clearly sequenced for each subject and year group.

Generally, most of the curriculum is taught successfully. Leaders make sure that teachers have the expertise to teach most of the curriculum. For example, they make sure that

phonics is taught consistently for pupils who need it. However, writing is taught less effectively than other subjects. Leaders act swiftly to address any gaps in staff expertise.

There is a high proportion of pupils who join the school with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders and staff are aware of these pupils and take appropriate action to make sure that gaps in knowledge are secured. Adaptations to the curriculum generally work well to support pupils who need additional support.

Typically, staff make appropriate checks on what pupils know and can do. Most misconceptions are noticed and addressed. Mostly, adjustments are made as a result of these checks. However, there is still more work to be done to revisit learning regularly to make sure that pupils consistently secure knowledge across all subjects in the curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders make sure that pupils' needs are identified swiftly and accurately. When pupils join the school midway through an academic year or key stage, pupils' emerging needs are identified and assessed as soon as possible. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, and those known or previously known to social care.

Leaders are ambitious and have high expectations of all pupils. The support that staff typically provide reduces barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. Some pupils make considerable progress from their starting points. However, there are a few pupils who do not progress quickly enough.

Leaders make sure that staff training is detailed to ensure that they have the confidence to meet the needs of individual pupils. Staff understand pupils' needs well. The systems leaders have put in place to review pupils' needs are effectively implemented by staff.

Strategies and funding to support disadvantaged pupils are implemented effectively. This is based on research and evidence. Staff work closely and successfully with different virtual schools to support pupils known or previously known to social care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's context. They know what is working well and what needs to be improved. Appropriate action is taken to improve specific areas, such as improvements with the writing curriculum. While early years provision is falling short of the expected standard, this is being dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Leaders demonstrate high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders ensure that staff's professional learning is prioritised and closely linked to the school's improvement work.

Governors and trustees are reasonably knowledgeable about the work of the school. They help to set the vision and direction of the school. Generally, they know what is working well and what needs to be improved. They provide some support and challenge to the school's

work. However, the support and challenge posed by governors and trustees could be more rigorous in areas where the school needs to secure improvements.

Leaders manage staff workload well and prioritise their wellbeing. Staff work in close partnership with parents and carers. Parents hold positive views of the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The personal development programme is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge successfully. This curriculum is tailored to the school's local context and individual pupils' needs. Disadvantaged pupils are successfully supported by the personal development programme.

Pupils learn about important fundamental British values, including democracy, respect and diversity. Most pupils develop a secure understanding of these values. They learn about life in modern Britain and how to stay safe online and in the local community. They learn about healthy relationships and kind friendships.

Pupils have a range of interesting opportunities to broaden their experiences. They develop talents and interests, such as sports and music, through extra-curricular clubs. Pupils have opportunities to develop resilience by representing their school in sporting competitions, such as rounders, basketball and tri-golf.

The curriculum is carefully enriched with visits that are closely related to the curriculum. For example, pupils attend residential visits and have completed a river field study as part of the geography curriculum.

Pupils value the varying leadership roles they take on that help to build a sense of community within the school. These include subject ambassadors and school councillors, who take an active part in school life. Pupils run a reading café held at lunchtimes to support pupils in reading for pleasure.

Pastoral support is highly effective in supporting families and pupils. Staff know pupils well, which helps them to support pupils' wellbeing successfully. Pupils know where they can seek support. They trust that they can speak to adults and that they will help them. Pupils know and understand about healthy choices. For example, the school has recently started a project to encourage pupils to reduce their screentime.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention

Leaders have identified that the writing curriculum needs improvement. These improvements to the curriculum have been implemented. However, it is too soon to see the positive impact of this work. This means that some children do not develop correct letter formation as quickly as possible. The early years curriculum is well sequenced. It takes

account of children's starting points and prioritises developing communication and language, phonics and physical skills.

Leaders have made sure that most staff have the necessary expertise to teach the curriculum well. Some of the curriculum is taught effectively. However, staff do not engage in high-quality interactions with children.

Children are well cared for. Routines are swiftly established as children join the school. Close partnerships with parents and carers are well established and highly valued. This helps children to quickly settle and feel safe. Staff provide targeted support and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children. Staff make regular and appropriate checks on how well children progress through the curriculum. This helps to identify gaps in learning. Most of this support effectively addresses gaps in children's knowledge.

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

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

This is a happy school where pupils feel valued. Some pupils join the school part way through an academic year or key stage. These pupils are welcomed and made to feel part of school life. Pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, some pupils do not achieve well across the whole curriculum. This is because some children in early years do not secure basic knowledge in reading and writing as quickly as they should.

The challenges and barriers to learning that pupils face are noticed swiftly. Pupils receive a range of pastoral support. This is helping them to remain calm so that they can learn.

Pupils are kind and polite towards each other. They learn about how to get along with others. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. Social times are a positive time of the school day where pupils play sports and games with their friends. Bullying is rare and pupils state that it is not an issue here. Pupils feel safe and know that staff will help them if they have any worries.

Pupils and their families are supported successfully with attendance. Pupils are expected to attend regularly and they do. This has been the case over time.

Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is tailored to individual needs. They take part in extra-curricular activities focused mainly around sports and music.

There are meaningful opportunities to enrich the curriculum through, for example, river study visits as part of the geography curriculum and to a space centre to learn about planets as part of a science topic. Pupils learn how to be resilient. They compete in a multitude of competitive sports, such as tag rugby, football and netball.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure high-quality teaching and adult interactions are implemented well in the early years.
- Leaders should ensure that the writing curriculum is taught consistently and effectively.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils' secure knowledge across all subjects in the curriculum.
- Governors and trustees should ensure that they provide rigorous challenge and support focused on areas for improvement.

About this inspection

This school is part of Ignite Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Wayne Downing, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anna Kelshaw.

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, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, the chair of the trust board, members of the local governing body and representatives of 2 virtual schools.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Horton

Lead inspector:
Emma Titchener, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Harjit Chahal, Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray, 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 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

248
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

210
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)

59.81%
Well above 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

2.02%
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

11.69%
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

Well above 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	77%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	80%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	87%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	94%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	80%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	44%	Above

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	85%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	89%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	60%	Above

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	87%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	58%	Above

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	89%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	59%	Above

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	80%	68%	12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	79%	69%	10 pp
2023/24 (final)	70%	67%	3 pp
2022/23 (final)	93%	66%	27 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	85%	80%	6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	89%	81%	9 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	80%	-5 pp
2022/23 (final)	93%	78%	15 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	87%	78%	9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	79%	78%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	85%	78%	7 pp
2022/23 (final)	100%	77%	23 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	89%	80%	9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	79%	81%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	90%	79%	11 pp
2022/23 (final)	100%	79%	21 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)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	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)	12.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	24.0%	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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