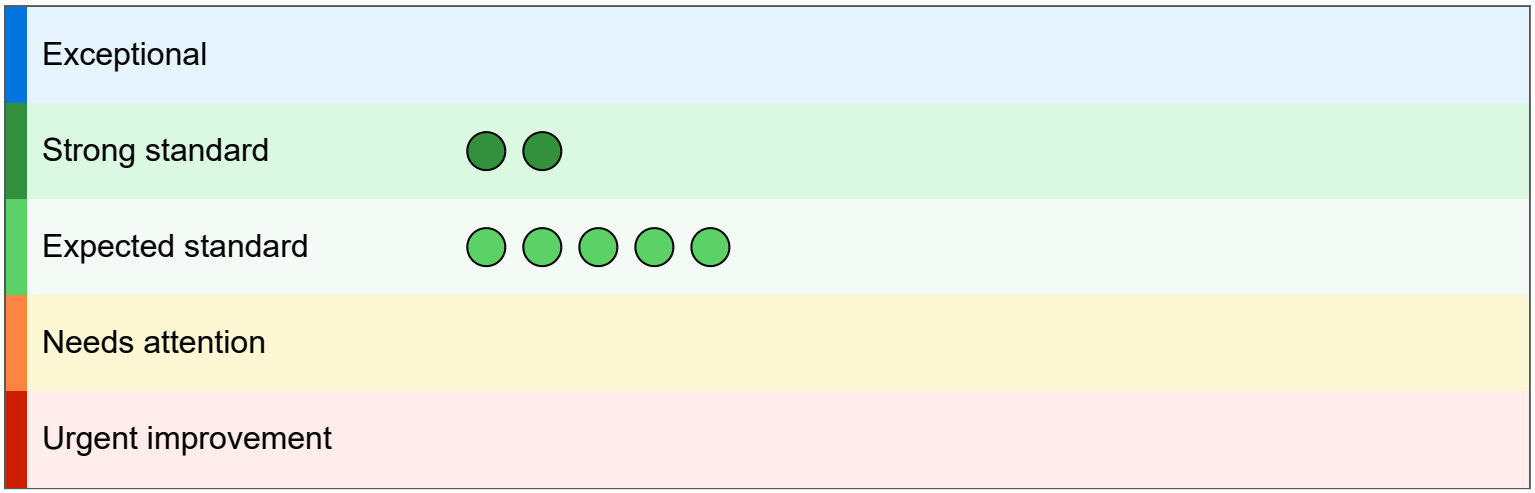
Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School

Address: 154 Sandridge Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4AP

Unique reference number (URN): 117135

Inspection report: 28 April 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

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders ensure that inclusion sits at the heart of the school's culture. They set high and ambitious expectations for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well and thrive. Leaders ensure that staff consistently and accurately identify pupils with additional needs. They act early and take steps to reduce gaps or other challenges. Leaders work collaboratively with parents and carers to understand each pupil's strengths and the challenges they face. Staff show confidence in applying the school's systems and expectations. They use these to ensure that pupils receive the right help at the right time. For example, pupils with low self-confidence can join a small group to help to build their self-esteem.

Leaders ensure that they have extensive oversight of how well pupils learn. They provide teaching staff with the training they need to support pupils appropriately. Regular information gathering allows leaders to check that this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This begins with ensuring that children in the early years have barriers to learning identified promptly.

Leaders work closely with local schools and external agencies. This joint working helps staff to secure additional services and expertise. Leaders ensure that they review the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They use it to ensure that all pupils have access to wider experiences, such as swimming, trips and clubs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders demonstrate highly effective, strategic leadership of pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They have designed a carefully sequenced programme that weaves together personal, social and health education, relationships education, assemblies, visits, and the behaviour curriculum. This thoughtful and connected approach ensures that pupils encounter key messages repeatedly and in meaningful ways. As a result, pupils grow into confident and resilient individuals. Pupils develop their social skills. They learn how to build friendships and resolve any minor issues with care and respect.

The school promotes fundamental British values thoughtfully and effectively. Pupils experience democracy through their election and participation as part of the school council. They take responsibility through their leadership opportunities to influence school life. For example, the 'play leaders' conduct themselves with pride and commitment. The curriculum allows pupils to learn the importance of staying safe online and how to do so. Pupils speak with confidence about online risks and explain how to respond sensibly. They also learn how to deal with risk within daily life. This knowledge helps them make safe choices and to know who in the community can help them.

Pupils are introduced to a range of cultures by the curriculum and wider experiences. They demonstrate maturity when discussing different religions, reflecting the inclusive culture of the school. Pupils talk respectfully about differences. They share their own thoughts and experiences. They show mutual understanding and empathy. Pupils are equipped with a confident understanding of their place in the wider community.

Leaders use funding carefully to remove barriers to participation. This enables all pupils to participate fully in school life. Pupils who require additional support also benefit from targeted pastoral oversight. The school has named 'champions' who promote and advocate for pupils' academic progress and emotional wellbeing. Staff respond sensitively to pupils who experience emotional challenges. They adjust routines to allow pupils to feel safe and settled.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Over time, pupils develop the knowledge they should in reading, writing and mathematics. This begins in the school's Nursery and Reception Years where children successfully start their learning journey. Across the school, pupils apply their accumulating knowledge across other areas of the curriculum. They learn to read well, as shown in their successful outcomes in phonics. Pupils' work shows that they understand their learning. They remember their learning well and recall facts and skills, which benefits their subsequent learning. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next educational steps. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make clear progress from their starting points.

Across the school, pupils speak with confidence and use a wide vocabulary. This success is shown in early years where children demonstrate the communication and language skills they need to be ready for Year 1. Pupils talk about their learning which evidences their learning over time.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have created an effective behaviour curriculum. Over time, this helps pupils become independent, responsible and respectful. Pupils behave very well. They act responsibly and show self control. Older pupils enjoy acting as role models for younger children. They take care to help and guide them. In lessons, pupils take a responsible attitude to their learning. They listen to each other and try hard. Pupils who need more support to manage their behaviour receive this. Staff are compassionate and help pupils learn to manage their behaviour in positive ways. Playtimes are positive and enjoyable experiences for all. Pupils learn how to play together and develop suitable social skills.

Attendance for most pupils is above the national average. However, some groups have lower attendance than others. Leaders work closely with families to improve attendance. They explain clearly to parents how poor attendance affects pupils’ learning. Leaders also provide support when a pupil’s attendance begins to fall. For example, pupils can attend the school’s breakfast club, which helps them start the day positively and enjoy coming in. The number of vulnerable pupils, including those who receive free school meals, is small. As a result, even slight changes in attendance for individual pupils have a higher impact on attendance figures for this group.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have developed a broad and interesting curriculum. It appropriately includes the knowledge and skills pupils need to be prepared for their next steps. Teachers create lessons which include a range of active and engaging activities and support pupils with their learning. Generally, teaching staff have the subject knowledge they need.

Leaders ensure that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective. Reading is taught particularly well. Teaching staff show skill in the way they support pupils with their phonics learning. In wider reading sessions, teaching staff emphasise appropriate grammar and language. Leaders have identified that pupils' writing could be further strengthened. In many instances, pupils receive the support they need with their letter formation, sentence structure and spelling. Pupils' communication and language development are supported effectively. In mathematics, pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils who need additional support for their language and communication receive it.

Teaching staff check how well pupils learn. They make appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In most lessons, they adapt the curriculum and their teaching so that any misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning are addressed. There is some variability in the precision and effectiveness of additional support for a few pupils.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders give the early years a high priority. They know the strengths of the provision and where to improve it through their ongoing evaluations. The early years curriculum is well thought through. It builds children’s knowledge from Nursery to Reception and prepares them well for entry into Year 1. Children are happy and settled. They benefit from the warm greetings they receive from staff.

Staff know children’s individual needs well. Staff explain learning clearly and ask questions to check understanding. This means that staff make adjustments to learning when needed. When appropriate, children benefit from adapted routines, such as extra time at the start of the day with a parent. This helps children to be ready to learn. Children enjoy their learning and apply it in their independent play. For example, in mathematics children count and calculate confidently using practical equipment. They demonstrate these skills when playing with their friends.

Across the early years environment, staff model a wide range of language and vocabulary. Children show confidence when communicating. They demonstrate their phonics understanding in their reading and writing, including spelling. Children write simple sentences with clear letter formation. The environment supports children’s wellbeing. Staff plan activities that develop children's physical skills and independence.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and governors guide the school with purpose. Governors use their skills and experience well. They know the school well and ask the right questions. They appropriately

support and challenge leaders across all areas of school life. This helps leaders to make well-judged decisions. Leaders know the school’s strengths and areas to improve. They understand the needs of pupils and families. They set clear priorities and act on them. For example, leaders introduced a new approach to writing. This change is showing a positive impact on pupils’ writing skills. Leaders remain focused on actions that have the greatest impact on pupils’ learning

Leaders act as positive role models and show high standards and professionalism every day. They involve and consult staff about school decisions. This helps staff to feel valued. Leaders plan training carefully to match the school's strategic priorities. They base it on proven approaches. Staff apply their professional development in their classroom practice. For example, recent training ensures that staff meet the needs of more vulnerable pupils. Leaders manage staff workload carefully. They take effective action to support staff wellbeing.

Leaders and governors work well with parents and carers and the wider community. Parents express positive views about the school and show trust in its leadership. The school builds strong links with families, so pupils feel that they belong. Leaders draw on these relationships to support pupils’ learning and personal development.

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

Pupils love coming to school and arrive with enthusiasm at the start of the day. They build positive relationships with the kind and caring school staff, who greet them with warmth. Pupils know that they are all unique and therefore special. Staff help pupils to feel a sense of belonging. This is enhanced by the school's annual 'global families' celebration. Pupils explain that ‘everyone is friendly.' They want to attend, as they feel safe and ready to learn.

Pupils behave very well across the school. In lessons, pupils benefit from the calm and purposeful expectations. They show self-discipline in the way they try their best and work hard. Staff explain clearly why good behaviour matters. This helps pupils to make the right choices. Even the youngest children in the school know and follow the school routines. Pupils treat each other with kindness, setting a good example to younger children. When some pupils need extra help to manage their feelings, staff provide this support effectively and kindly. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff act quickly and appropriately. Pupils know which adults to talk to if they feel worried.

Generally, pupils achieve well. They enjoy their learning and remember new knowledge and skills well. Staff know pupils well and understand their needs. For example, they use clear language in their explanations and expectations. Pupils receive the support they need with their learning and wellbeing.

Pupils enjoy extra activities beyond the classroom which nurture and spark their interests. They enjoy trips and experiences which help them to make sense of their learning. Visitors to the school help them to understand the community they live in and the difference they can make. For example, some pupils visited a local care home. Pupils understand the world around them and show empathy to others.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed highly effective teaching practice to ensure the writing curriculum is taught consistently well across all year groups.
- Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment information to check pupils' understanding precisely and target support consistently well.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors is Freya Loftus.

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 and other senior teachers during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Hannah Rimmer

Lead inspector:
Jessie Linsley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Ania Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Kirk, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

291
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

322
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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

6.72%
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

1.37%
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

8.25%
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

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)

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 (3 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.9%	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 (3 term)	12.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	10.5%	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.

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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