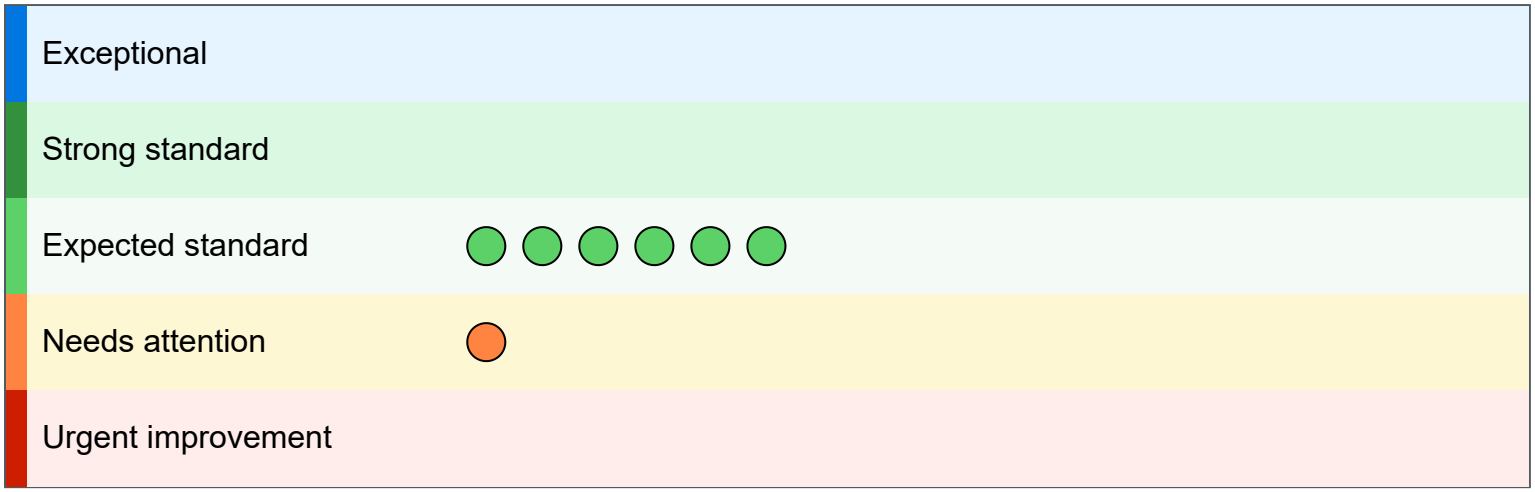
St Germans Academy

Address: School Lane, St Germans, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3DZ

Unique reference number (URN): 145531

Inspection report: 6 May 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders' actions have had a positive impact on pupils' attendance. As a result, levels of attendance and persistent absence are now typically close to national averages and have improved steadily over the past 3 years. Leaders analyse attendance patterns closely. This includes different pupil groups and at an individual pupil level. Typically, this helps leaders to identify concerns about attendance early and provide timely support that helps pupils to attend more regularly. Pupils generally arrive at school on time each day. Leaders welcome pupils at the school gate, giving parents the opportunity to ask questions or seek support if they have concerns.

Leaders set high expectations for behaviour and promote a calm and caring culture. Behaviour policies are clear and applied consistently by staff. Staff model positive behaviour through established routines and respectful interactions. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and during social times. This helps to create a safe and purposeful environment. However, sometimes, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as positive as they could be. This is because they have not been provided with enough opportunities to develop their resilience and independence skills. Staff use praise, reminders and conversations to help pupils reflect on their behaviour and learn from poor choices. Leaders monitor behaviour incidents closely and provide targeted support promptly when needed. Staff respond effectively to concerns about bullying and harmful behaviour, including such behaviour that occurs online.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders typically have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. Leaders use this knowledge to deploy staff appropriately to support pupils' learning. Leaders work with teachers to further develop the quality of teaching. Supported by the trust, teachers are provided with training to further develop their knowledge, with the aim of ensuring the curriculum is delivered consistently well. Staff recognise the importance of providing pupils with more opportunities to revisit and consolidate prior learning. These opportunities vary across subjects. Leaders' recent focus on the quality of teaching is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

The curriculum is ambitious, well sequenced and thoughtfully planned across subjects. It enables pupils to build on what they already know and to understand what they will learn next.

Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' core skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. For example, pupils at the early stages of reading learn to read using phonics. Generally, staff teach phonics consistently well, and this helps pupils to develop their reading accuracy and fluency.

Teachers usually support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils appropriately in lessons. Teachers make a range of adaptations to

help remove pupils' barriers to learning. As a result, pupils can generally access the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise children's wellbeing and welfare. Children form trusting relationships with adults quickly. Staff know children well and create a calm and secure learning environment. Clear routines help children to develop their confidence and independence.

Leaders have designed a broad and carefully sequenced early years curriculum. The curriculum supports children's progress across all areas of learning. Children typically make good progress from their starting points. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children. Generally, staff use assessment effectively to identify gaps in children's learning and adapt provision appropriately. Targeted support helps children to catch up when needed. Adults model language well, extend children's thinking and ask purposeful questions. Staff interactions with children support the development of children's communication and vocabulary.

Leaders prioritise early reading. Children learn to read using phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Children respond positively and begin to develop early reading skills. Staff embed early mathematics knowledge through play, routines and appropriate activities. Children confidently display their number, shape and measure knowledge.

Staff support children's personal, social and emotional development well. Children learn to cooperate, share and manage their feelings. Leaders plan transitions to and from early years carefully and work closely with parents. Children are typically well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have high ambitions and expectations for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those who are known or previously known to social care. Leaders have appropriate procedures to help staff identify pupils' barriers to learning and wellbeing, from early years onwards. As a result, leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND across the school.

Staff implement a coherent, step-by-step approach to supporting pupils in lessons. This starts at whole-class level by adapting teaching to what pupils know and can remember. When pupils have more specific barriers to learning, leaders put effective personalised support plans in place. Leaders agree on the nature of support and adaptations with parents and, where appropriate, external professionals. Leaders carefully check the impact of the additional support that pupils receive. This helps to make sure that the support meets pupils' needs. Usually, pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care make suitable progress from their various starting points.

Leaders use additional funding appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. This enables pupils to take part in wider curriculum opportunities, such as educational visits, clubs and the Year 6 residential trip.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders provide effective leadership that gives the school a clear direction. They act as positive role models for staff, pupils and the wider school community. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas for improvement. They focus on the right priorities at the right time. Leaders' work is beginning to improve pupils' achievement across the school.

Leaders, supported by the trust, provide high-quality, evidence-informed staff training and professional development. Staff at all career stages benefit from this, including early career teachers. For example, the school works in partnership with a university to inform teaching research projects, which all teachers undertake. Leaders share this research across the trust's other schools. Leaders also think creatively to enable all staff to attend key training and professional development events. This contributes to the school's future ambition of ensuring consistently high-quality teaching across all classes.

The trust provides the school with effective support and challenge. Trust leaders regularly review the school's improvement priorities and check the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that those actions have the desired impact. Governance is effective. Trustees understand their statutory duties and meet those duties through clear governance structures. Governance committees provide appropriate oversight and challenge. For example, committee members regularly check on attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and pupils' achievement.

Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and workload. They gather staff views and act on them. Support for staff's mental health is available. Leaders also build positive relationships with parents and carers, relevant professionals and the wider community. These relationships contribute to pupils' sense of belonging and achievement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have designed a personal development programme that supports pupils' personal, social and moral development well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Importantly, the programme provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge about relationships and physical and mental health.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles. They understand the importance of eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and drinking enough water. Pupils can also describe strategies that support their mental wellbeing. These strategies include taking breaks, spending time outdoors, reading and taking part in physical activity. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe outside school and online. They know how to manage risks, follow road safety rules and respond appropriately to strangers.

Relationships and health education is generally suitable and age-appropriate. Pupils can explain what they have learned about friendships, families and positive relationships. They understand that families can be different and show respect for this. Pupils also demonstrate a secure understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils can explain what these values mean and relate them to school life and the wider community.

Leaders provide a wide range of enrichment activities and clubs. These opportunities help pupils to develop interests and talents, while also building personal qualities such as resilience and curiosity. For example, all pupils take part in bushcraft during the academic year and can also attend the after-school club. Activities include learning about fire, building dens and working with water. Pupils learn to work as a team and typically grow in confidence. Some pupils overcome personal worries and fears through these experiences.

Pastoral support is generally responsive and well-matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are confident in seeking help when they need it. Staff identify concerns promptly and provide appropriate support. As a result, pupils feel valued, supported and included.

Needs attention

Achievement **Needs attention**

Over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. As a result, some pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, have important gaps in their knowledge. Pupils' outcomes in national tests have been below national averages in recent years. This includes Year 6 writing and mathematics, the Year 4 multiplication tables check and the Year 1 phonics check. Leaders have begun to improve the precision of assessment and the quality of teaching. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work, and some key gaps in knowledge remain for older pupils.

Pupils speak confidently about their learning. They are proud of the work they produce. For example, some pupils have made significant improvements in their handwriting over the last year. However, what pupils know and can remember varies across subjects.

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

Pupils learn about the importance of raising their aspirations so that they can fulfil their potential. Leaders promote this through the school's values of belief and determination. These values are central to pupils' daily school life. Staff seek to inspire pupils and teach them the importance of respecting others. Pupils benefit from this approach. They enjoy learning and speak positively about their experiences at school. For example, pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the school's outdoor learning curriculum, known as 'bushcraft'.

Pupils typically learn well in lessons because teaching is calm, purposeful and supportive. The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. Pupils learn a wide range of subjects. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in national tests, particularly in reading and writing. Leaders are addressing these aspects of pupils' achievement, but it is too early to see any significant improvement.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, benefit from leaders identifying barriers to their learning accurately. Leaders put appropriate adaptations in place that help pupils to access the curriculum. Leaders also check that this support is having the intended impact.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Behaviour is calm and respectful, and pupils feel safe here. Leaders lead by example and have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They have positive relationships with staff and with each other. Bullying is rare and leaders usually deal with any concerns about bullying promptly. Pupils typically attend school regularly.

Pupils benefit from a range of personal development opportunities. Clubs, performances and educational visits help pupils to develop teamwork, confidence and resilience. The personal development programme helps pupils to understand diversity, health and safety, and fundamental British values. Leaders place a high importance on educating pupils about healthy relationships. Pupils learn how to contribute positively to their local community and to modern British society.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is of a consistently high quality so that pupils achieve more highly in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers revisit and consolidate pupils' prior learning regularly and consistently so that pupils secure a coherent body of knowledge as they progress through the school.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils understand the importance of having positive attitudes to learning and consistently demonstrate these attitudes in lessons.

About this inspection

This school is part of Unity Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mr Glyn Hambling, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mr John Baumber.

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, other school leaders, pupils, parents and carers during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the CEO and trustees, during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Louise Arrowsmith

Lead inspector:
Benjamin Axon, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Rob Edwards, 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 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

111
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

105
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)

15.96%
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

6.31%
Well above 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

3.60%
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

Close to 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	40%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	45%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	60%	Below

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	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	73%	Below

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	56%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	71%	Below

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	62%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	73%	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 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	17%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	33%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	33%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	17%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	17%	68%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	33%	80%	-46 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	33%	78%	-44 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	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	17%	80%	-63 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	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 (3 term)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	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 (3 term)	14.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.6%	16.2%	Close to average

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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