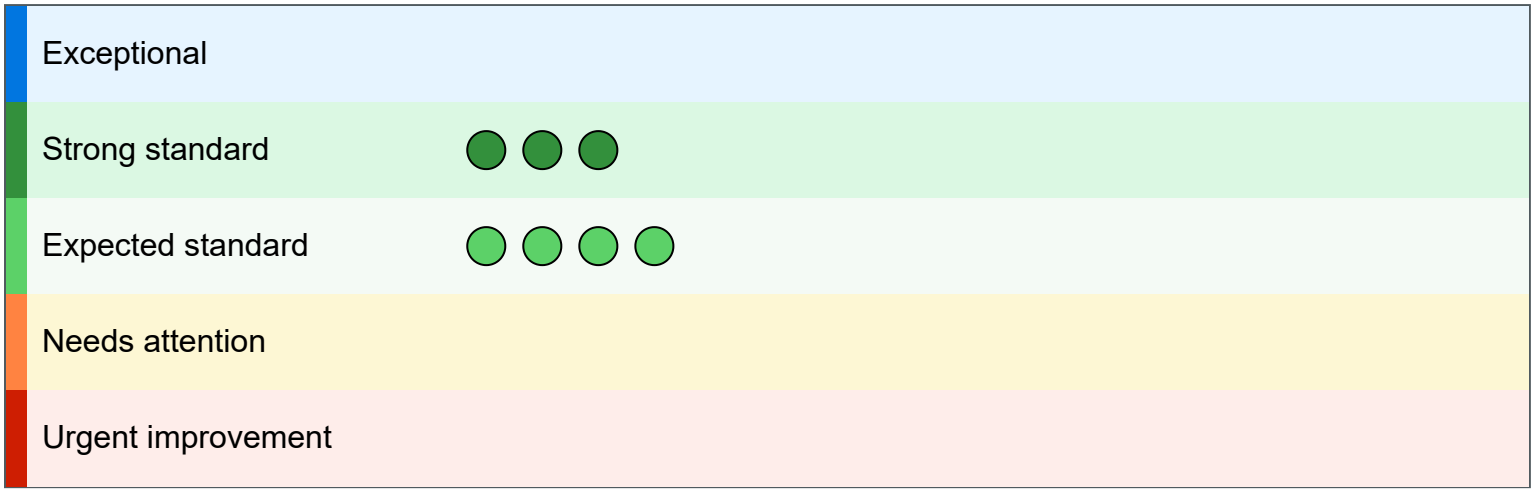
St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Address: Hunters Chase, South Godstone, Godstone, Surrey, RH9 8HR

Unique reference number (URN): 144939

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.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders focus on securing high attendance for all pupils. Leaders check attendance closely and analyse patterns of absence accurately, both for individual pupils and groups of pupils. Leaders build highly positive relationships with families and work collaboratively to remove barriers to attendance, often utilising the school's home–school link worker. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages and is improving quickly, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning. They benefit from friendly interactions with their peers during social times. Routines are well embedded across the school and support pupils' consistently positive behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and kind. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and fairly. Bullying is very rare. Leaders address bullying and unkind behaviour effectively when it occurs. Pupils know that there are trusted adults they can turn to for support. They are confident that staff respond quickly to any concerns. Older pupils also make a significant contribution to the school community by serving as anti-bullying ambassadors and peer mediators. Pupils feel safe and are safe in school.

Early years

Strong standard

Children in the early years are happy, well settled and extremely well cared for. Staff establish calm and consistent routines that help children to feel safe and ready to learn. Leaders have thoughtfully designed the learning environment to support children's development. Early years staff use carefully selected indoor resources to develop children's fine motor skills, while outdoor equipment makes a notable difference to children's strength, balance and coordination.

From the start of Reception, staff teach phonics in a clear sequence. They accurately match books to the sounds children know. Staff address any gaps in children's phonic knowledge rapidly and check children's reading progress robustly. Staff also teach early mathematics consistently well. Leaders provide staff with highly effective professional learning, for example to enhance children's communication and language skills.

The early years curriculum is coherently sequenced to help children secure essential knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make significant progress from their starting points. Leaders and staff identify barriers to learning and wellbeing early and address them through precisely targeted, personalised support. Staff maximise learning opportunities as they play alongside children. They use skilful questioning to extend children's thinking, develop vocabulary and broaden their interests. The school's successful partnerships with parents and carers help ensure that parents are well equipped to support their children's education at home.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders' commitment to a highly inclusive culture is clear. This commitment is evident from the start of the school day. Vulnerable pupils, including the youngest children and those with a visual impairment, follow carefully planned routines. These enable them to enter school independently, often supported by an identified member of staff or an older pupil buddy.

At the earliest opportunity, leaders assess pupils' needs, both accurately and precisely. Highly skilled staff adapt space and resources according to their honed insights about pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care benefit from expertly tailored provision. Staff provide expert help with speech and language to ensure pupils can access the curriculum. This supports pupils' learning and development, enabling pupils to meet the school's high aspirations. Leaders have also established effective partnerships with a range of professionals and external specialists, ensuring timely access to wider support for pupils when needed.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively, drawing on relevant evidence and research. Leaders rigorously track the engagement and participation of disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable pupils in wider opportunities, such as clubs and enrichment activities. This helps leaders to provide targeted support for individual pupils to encourage and promote their involvement in wider school life.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children in the early years achieve consistently well. They gain essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This, combined with their personal and social development, prepares them well for key stage 1.

As pupils progress through key stages 1 and 2, they produce work that demonstrates age-appropriate knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically achieve in line with their peers and make appropriate progress from their starting points. However, the work that pupils produce in wider curriculum subjects, while showing a generally secure knowledge, is not of a consistently high quality.

Pupils' achievement in key stage 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics is above or broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are prepared well for secondary education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders hold a secure and realistic view of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They make appropriate choices to improve provision, such as refining the teaching of writing. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is broad and well sequenced in all subjects. Leaders adapt the curriculum to make it accessible for all

pupils, including those with visual impairment. Leaders ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are taught effectively. Staff provide suitable support for pupils whose phonics knowledge is not secure.

Teaching is typically effective. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use that knowledge well in their teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from tailored support for their learning. This support enables pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and complete the same or similar work to their peers.

Generally, teachers check pupils' understanding regularly to determine what pupils know and can remember. However, inconsistencies in the effectiveness of these checks mean that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, particularly in wider curriculum subjects.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

There is a coherent, shared vision across all levels of leadership in this inclusive and successful school. Leaders understand the school's strengths well. They identify clear actions to address areas for further improvement, for example in the curriculum and teaching. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

Thoughtful professional development strengthens staff knowledge and expertise. Training is meaningfully planned and contributes directly to improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders, including governors, evaluate the impact of their work closely. They have fostered a school culture in which pupils experience a positive and enriching education. Teachers at the start of their career benefit from the guidance and support that leaders have put in place for them. Leaders prioritise staff workload and wellbeing. Staff feel highly valued and supported.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities and are very committed to the school. Their care, knowledge and expertise exemplify the school's values. Governors provide the school with appropriate support and challenge. Trustees maintain robust oversight and ensure all statutory responsibilities are met well. The trust offers effective support across a range of areas within school life, including supporting workload and delivering a well-designed, collaborative programme of professional development. Parents and carers speak positively about the school. They believe that the school helps their children to succeed. Parents value the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have established a coherent and carefully planned approach to personal development and wellbeing that has a positive impact on pupils. The programme prepares pupils well for life beyond school, including how to stay safe online and make healthy choices. Pupils show maturity in their understanding of issues such as harmful substances and healthy lifestyles. Pupils receive appropriate relationships education and learn about the fundamental British values. Leaders ensure that these important issues are taught clearly and in age-appropriate ways, enabling pupils to contribute to discussions and develop their understanding.

Pupils know the school’s values of love, courage and forgiveness well. They demonstrate these values in their everyday actions. Pupils generally learn well about other faiths and beliefs, equality and diversity, and the protected characteristics. Pupils learn to respect others and appreciate people's differences. Pupils who join the school after Reception describe how warmly staff welcome them and how this helps them to feel part of the school community. Pupils understand the importance of kindness and belonging.

The school nurtures pupils' talents and interests. Pupils take part enthusiastically in a range of clubs, residential trips and educational visits. Leaders ensure that all pupils can take part, including disadvantaged pupils and others who may be at risk of missing out on these experiences. Leaders check on pupils' participation in these activities and adapt the school's enrichment offer in line with pupils’ feedback and interests.

Pupils in Year 6 take on leadership roles that contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils understand their leadership responsibilities and act as positive role models for younger children. Pupils develop the confidence to advocate for change. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to represent the school, participating in a range of competitions including football matches, dance shows and swimming galas. Leaders use weekly assemblies effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this inclusive school. They arrive each morning to a warm welcome from staff and their peers. Pupils, including children in early years, settle quickly to morning activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and appreciate the variety of ways in which staff make lessons interesting. In the early years, children take part in a rich range of purposeful activities. The early years curriculum provides children with the essential knowledge and skills that they need, ensuring that children are very well prepared for their next stage of education. Generally, pupils experience effective teaching across the school that helps them to achieve well. This includes pupils with visual impairment.

Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the school’s vision, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’ They value celebrating this collectively and embody the school's principles in their attitudes and actions throughout the school day. Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils understand the school's expectations of them and follow established routines. Bullying is uncommon and leaders deal with it swiftly if it occurs. Pupils are safe at school.

Pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. Pupils who experience difficulties in attending school are provided with appropriate and timely support that removes barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. They take part in clubs, educational visits and sports competitions, such as swimming galas and dance performances. These experiences contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching across the wider curriculum subjects is consistently effective, so that pupils secure and build subject-specific knowledge and skills over time and are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Leaders should ensure that staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding consistently and effectively so that pupils' errors and misconceptions are addressed promptly, helping pupils to secure and extend their learning more deeply.

About this inspection

This school is part of the SDBE Multi Academy 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), Mark Burnett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jonathan Sedgwick.

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 school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with representatives from the local governing body, trustees, other leaders within the trust and the CEO from the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Southwark. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in July 2024.

The school includes provision for pupils with a visual impairment. Currently, 6 pupils attend this resourced provision.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Amanda Blackburn

Lead inspector:
Martin Dyer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Kirstine Boon, Ofsted Inspector
Chris Toye, 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

239
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)

17.96%
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

7.11%
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

10.46%
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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

VI - Visual Impairment

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (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	69%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	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 (final)	93%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	81%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average

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	57%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	63%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	70%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	70%	60%	Close to average

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	78%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average

‘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	57%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	69%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	66%	-6 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	70%	80%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	70%	78%	-8 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	78%	78%	1 pp
2024/25 (final)	63%	78%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	80%	77%	3 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	65%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp

‘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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.0%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	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)	13.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	13.6%	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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