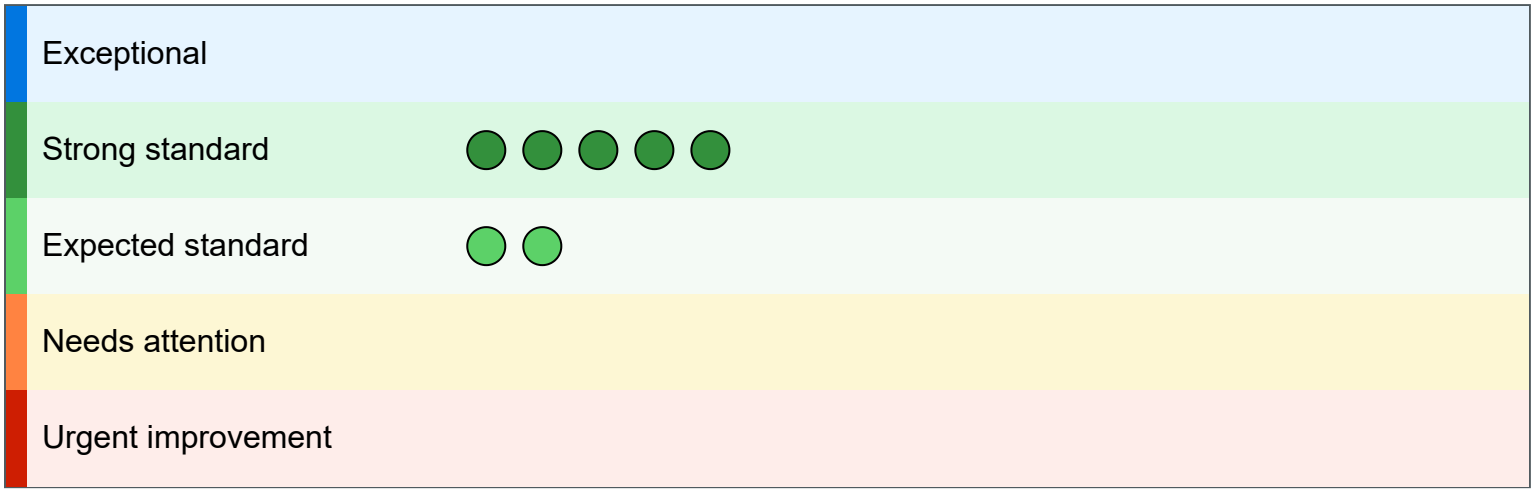
Bishop Aldhelm's Church of England Primary School

Address: Winston Avenue, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1PG

Unique reference number (URN): 144873

Inspection report: 12 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

Attendance is a clear priority for the school. Leaders share the importance of high attendance with families as soon as they join the school community. Engaging learning, a strong sense of belonging and calm classrooms mean pupils want to be in school and attendance rates reflect this. Leaders understand the barriers that affect attendance and track all groups carefully. Their systematic approach helps them to spot patterns quickly and take timely action. Staff work as a team and consider each pupil's full circumstances, while parents benefit from pastoral support that helps improve their children's attendance. Leaders' actions have led to sustained improvements for individuals and groups, including pupils who were previously persistently absent.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and pupils live up to them. Behaviour is highly positive. Pupils are polite, respectful and caring, and they greet one another and visitors warmly. Any disruptions are rare and managed quickly using the school's relationship based approach. Clear routines support smooth movement around school, and pupils demonstrate secure self-regulation and resilience in lessons. All staff model expectations consistently. At social times, pupils play cooperatively and use taught strategies to resolve conflict. Leaders track behaviour closely, act on patterns and use pupils' individual support plans effectively. Bullying is rare and dealt with robustly, with parents fully involved when support is needed.

Early years

Strong standard

The early years provision is highly effective, giving children a very positive start to their education. The addition of the school's pre-school has strengthened this further. Leaders are highly knowledgeable and make thoughtful curriculum decisions. The atmosphere is warm and purposeful. Staff interactions with children are effective while allowing children to lead their learning.

Across pre-school and Reception, well established routines and skilled staff support children to pay attention, develop their independence and develop strong learning behaviours. Children focus well, they respond promptly to expectations and they behave exceptionally well. The environment is calm, purposeful and rich in activities that build early foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff have high expectations, prioritising secure letter formation, number facts and high-quality phonics teaching.

Leaders ensure that indoor and outdoor spaces are engaging and carefully designed to promote high-quality learning. The environment is exciting and language-rich, with role play and outdoor exploration encouraging vocabulary such as 'micro-beast' and 'habitat'.

Learning experiences are deliberate, responsive and well matched to children's needs. Children progress well and are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders track progress rigorously and ensure that staff target specific needs, with disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the centre of decision-making.

Leaders provide professional development that is sharply focused and its impact is clear. There is a strong focus on spoken language. Staff use agreed approaches consistently, expanding children's language at every opportunity. Initiatives in the setting build confidence in speaking and sharing experiences.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Pupils know that their school welcomes everyone and celebrates difference. Leaders have built this inclusive culture by placing relationships at the centre of school life and through valuing every child as an individual. They set high expectations for all pupils removing or reducing barriers so every child can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Leaders have created a strong, well-organised system of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff identify pupils who need extra help quickly and provide the right support at the right time. Skilled staff have deep expertise, enabling a wide range of adaptations to learning that suit individual pupils' needs. Pupils also benefit from caring pastoral support. Leaders use additional funding, for example from the pupil premium, to thoughtfully improve learning, wellbeing and access to wider opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. They remove barriers so all pupils can take part in every experience, regardless of additional needs.

Teachers adapt learning confidently so pupils can succeed in class. They receive high-quality training and guidance to help them meet pupils' needs well. Clear systems ensure staff spot any new or changing needs quickly. Leaders ensure additional support is accessed in a timely manner. They work closely with external professionals to strengthen the support that pupils receive. They review pupils' progress and the impact of targeted work regularly and make swift adjustments when needed.

Parents stay fully involved in their children's journeys and benefit from workshops, guidance and support from the school's wider pastoral team.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leadership is a clear strength of the school. Leaders are passionate and committed to the progress and wellbeing of the whole community. They have embedded a highly positive and professional learning culture rooted in strong relationships and teamwork. They remain aspirational for all. They are approachable and they actively support pupils and staff. Strong collaboration in school and within the trust leadership model ensures all areas of the school's work succeed. Leaders reflect deeply and act ambitiously, evolving structures and systems to meet the needs of the school community.

Leaders hold an accurate and informed understanding of the school's strengths and the areas they want to develop further. They make all decisions in pupils' best interests and root agreed actions in well-informed research and evidence. They work strategically to implement change successfully and ensure staff take part in decision-making and implementation.

Staff at all levels feel valued, supported and developed, creating a positive culture and cohesive team. Staff are happy and proud to work at the school.

Leaders provide regular, timely and well-targeted professional development, particularly around meeting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. Trust wide networks share effective practice and ensure staff can access advice or support quickly. Leaders of special educational needs and/or disabilities provide highly effective leadership, with training precisely matched to emerging needs.

The trust provides appropriate challenge and support while also ensuring the school maintains its distinctive Church of England identity. The trust leadership structure and the local governance model meet their statutory duties while also providing effective support and challenge.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders are passionate and deeply committed to developing the whole child. Their well-planned programme for personal development delivers meaningful lessons and experiences that prepare pupils well for later life. The curriculum is broad and purposeful, and pupils' conduct reflects its impact. Pupils develop secure knowledge of the personal, social, health and relationships curriculum, as well as a detailed understanding of world views and religions. They have a strong grasp of fundamental British values and protected characteristics, and they show maturity, respect and positive attitudes when sharing their views.

The curriculum reflects pupils' local context and prioritises safety. Children learn about rail safety because of the nearby railway line and they learn about water safety due to the coastal location. They recall this learning clearly and explain how they use it in daily life. Their understanding of online safety is secure and they describe risks with confidence.

Pupils value the wide range of clubs and opportunities available to them and their role in planning what is available. They speak enthusiastically about 'Heath School', where they learn to care for their unique local environment and enjoy clubs such as crochet, origami, choir and a variety of sports. Leadership roles, including those on the school council, eco warriors and sports leaders, give pupils meaningful responsibilities. These opportunities help them to develop character and contribute as a citizen to society. Opportunities such as young carers club and site manager club build resilience and confidence. Leaders track participation carefully and they target pupils who would benefit most from attending particular clubs and activities. Leaders use funding well, such as the pupil premium funding, to remove barriers so all pupils can take part.

Leaders promote play for all year groups, giving pupils opportunities to take part in junk modelling and building projects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. Wellbeing strategies such as mindfulness, outdoor learning and strong pastoral support are firmly embedded and shape the school's caring culture. Pupils contribute to the community through visits to a local care home, support for a food bank and close links with the local church.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils achieve well across the school and make secure progress from their starting points, including disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes over time show that pupils attain at least in line with national outcomes. Results in phonics and the multiplication tables check are above national figures, reflecting leaders' focus on early reading and number fluency. Pupils transition confidently through each year group and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders' work to strengthen pupils' spelling and handwriting across all subjects is having a positive impact. In English, pupils' work is of a high quality. In some other subjects, such as history and geography, expectations for what pupils can achieve are still being embedded. Pupils cannot recall knowledge in these subjects as readily as they can in some other curriculum areas.

Leaders check pupils' progress closely and provide timely, targeted support for pupils who are not yet on track.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-matched support and make appropriate progress from their starting points. Carefully designed adaptations help them to access learning successfully and feel confident in the classroom.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the curriculum across the school. They make decisions that strengthen curriculum progression and subject sequencing, especially in the core subjects. Reading, writing and mathematics have well-designed curriculums and are taught well. The teaching of early reading and phonics is of a high quality and firmly embedded.

All wider curriculum subjects are well structured and sequenced. Recent curriculum refinements that focus on key concepts, essential vocabulary and the knowledge that pupils need have led to improvements in these areas. These developments are well established in subjects such as religious education and personal, social and health education. In these areas appropriate tasks lead to pupils securing detailed knowledge. Some subjects such as art and history are still being strengthened.

Classroom routines run smoothly and help pupils to stay focused. Staff benefit from well-targeted professional development, which leads to consistent teaching approaches across the school. Purposeful spoken language work strengthens pupils' vocabulary and communication skills from the early years onwards. The youngest children learn to express their views clearly and listen to others. These skills build progressively so pupils become confident communicators.

Teaching and the ways in which staff check on pupils' knowledge are effective. Pupils respond well to feedback and understand how to improve their work. Pupils benefit from clear structures and consistent approaches that support learning without causing

unnecessary information overload. Leaders deploy staff intelligently to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and pupils who need extra help receive timely, well-matched support.

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

Pupils arrive each morning to a warm welcome from leaders. The school is inclusive and staff know pupils as individuals. Staff greet pupils enthusiastically. They check how pupils are feeling, which helps pupils to be ready to focus for the day. Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour, learning and interactions, and pupils rise to meet these. Relationships sit at the heart of the school. The distinctive values of the school have helped to develop a strong, caring school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They attend well and their behaviour rarely requires correction. Pupils describe their school as loving and the staff as kind. Pupils, parents and staff feel proud to belong to the school community.

School leaders have developed well-established systems and routines to ensure that pupils feel safe in school. As pupils enter their classrooms, consistent routines create a calm, orderly start to the day. Even the youngest children settle quickly to their first tasks. Pupils learn in focused, purposeful classrooms supported by staff who are keen to help them to succeed. Pupils describe their learning as joyful and fun. Leaders ensure pupils receive high-quality teaching, they progress well from their starting points and achieve well. Pupils benefit from enriching experiences such as the fresh air club, where they cook on open fires and explore the natural environment, and singing in the choir at the O2 Arena.

Pupils who face barriers to learning or to their wellbeing receive highly effective care. Leaders ensure staff have the skills needed to support these pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language settle quickly on joining the school because staff provide particularly strong support. Leaders plan transitions carefully, both into the school and within and beyond it. Pupils at all stages feel well prepared for their next steps in education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge and skills across all wider curriculum areas, and that this is consistently demonstrated through high-quality work and learning that reflects the ambition and progression built into each subject.
- Leaders should strengthen their work to ensure all pupils make consistently strong progress from their starting points, so that outcomes across subjects continue to rise and exceed national figures.

About this inspection

This school is part of Hamwick 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,

Mr Robert Farmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mr Gary Plummer.

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, the deputy headteacher, 3 assistant headteachers, 2 of whom are also special educational needs and disabilities coordinators, the director of education, the chief executive officer, the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of governors.

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 Salisbury. Its last section 48 inspection was on 21 November 2023.

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

The school also, under the same registration, runs an onsite pre school.

There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Headteacher: Scott Tait

Lead inspector:
Sophie Hillson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Mark Burgess, Ofsted Inspector
Carl Thornton, Ofsted Inspector
Anna Mills, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

626

Well above 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

630
Well above 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)

16.07%
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

4.15%
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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.66%
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

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	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	66%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	56%	60%	Close to average

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	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	44%	Close to average

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	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average

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	56%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	48%	59%	Close to average

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	41%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	67%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	35%	66%	-32 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	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	80%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	78%	-22 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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	57%	77%	-21 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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	79%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	48%	79%	-31 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 (3 term)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.8%	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)	9.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	13.1%	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.

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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