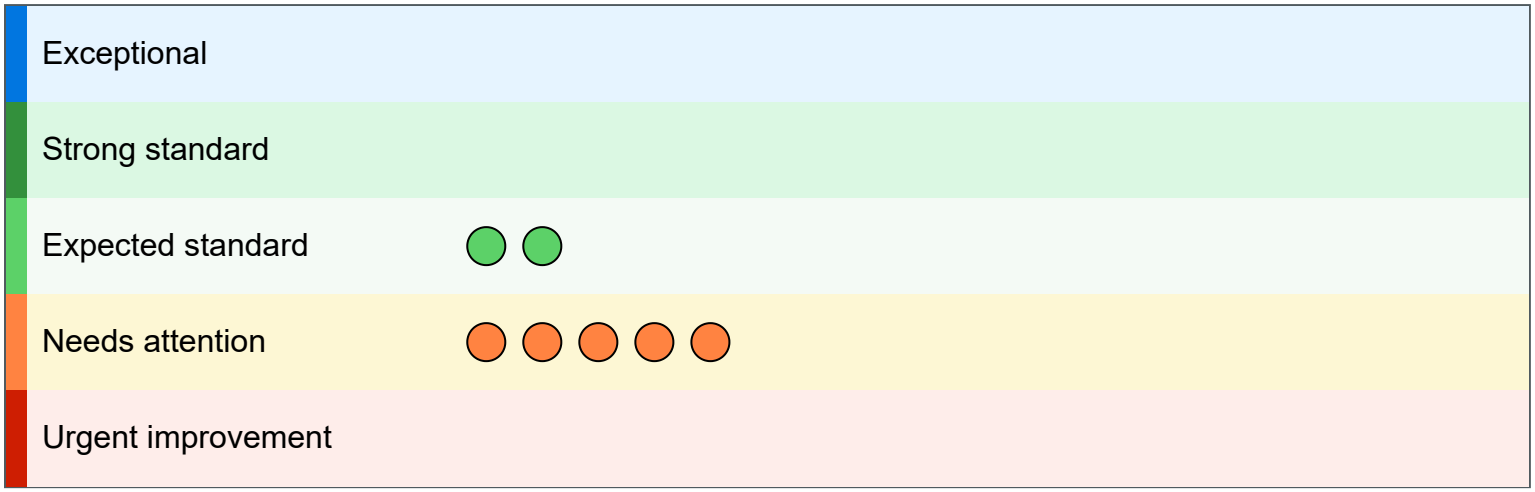
St Oswald's CofE Primary School

Address: Howgill Close, Burneside, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 6QR

Unique reference number (URN): 112314

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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders know pupils well and promote high expectations for attendance. They act quickly and effectively when concerns arise and work with families to support regular attendance. Where pupils struggle, leaders provide the support they need to attend more regularly.

Behaviour across the school is positive. Pupils conduct themselves calmly and move sensibly around school. They feel safe and show respect for those around them. In lessons, pupils settle quickly and are eager to learn. Leaders' outdoor play programme has improved the way pupils behave at break and lunchtime. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour are rare and not tolerated. Leaders set clear expectations for behaviour. Staff apply these expectations consistently. This helps pupils to know what is expected of their behaviour. Where needed, staff make appropriate adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These adjustments help them to manage how they behave and access lessons successfully.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong. They show respect for people from different backgrounds, beliefs and family structures. This helps them to respect and value differences. Through links with the local parish church, pupils reflect on questions about life and beliefs. They appreciate moments of awe and wonder, particularly during outdoor experiences that include time for silence and reflection. Through the school council, pupils vote in elections, make speeches and represent their classmates at parliament day each year. Pupils take on a range of leadership roles, including as ambassadors and sports leaders. This strengthens their understanding of responsibility and how communities work.

Pupils take part in an effective personal development programme. They benefit from relationships and health education that is appropriate to their age and stage. This complies with statutory guidance. During a whole-school health week, pupils learn how to look after themselves and make positive choices. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe online. Staff are on hand to support pupils' wellbeing. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils can take part in all aspects of this programme.

Pupils at this school love to sing. They perform at community events and singing competitions throughout the year, sharing their enthusiasm with audiences beyond school. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including sports, outdoor activities, cooking and gardening. Older pupils appreciate the visit to Liverpool. This builds their independence and broadens their experience of the world. By the time they leave school, pupils complete fell walks and learn to canoe. Pupils value these experiences and the chance to develop their resilience and character. These opportunities help pupils to develop the confidence they need for their next steps.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Pupils' achievement in national tests varies. For example, in 2025, there were considerable improvements in phonics and reading. However, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, tend not to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6. This points to gaps in how pupils build and retain key knowledge. For example, Year 4 pupils achieve highly in the multiplication tables check, yet too few reach the expected standard in mathematics in Year 6. Younger pupils are starting to spell and punctuate more accurately, while some older pupils still struggle to use grammar, punctuation and spelling to write their ideas well.

In the wider curriculum, some pupils remember the activity but not the key concepts, words or skills they were meant to learn. This makes it harder for them to recall and apply important knowledge over time.

Even so, some pupils with additional needs, and some who face disadvantage, make steady progress from their starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. However, pupils do not consistently complete activities that build their knowledge over time. This means that pupils find it difficult to connect new learning to what they already know. Sometimes, teachers do not explain new information clearly or check whether pupils have understood what they have been taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that teachers do not routinely identify and rectify.

Sometimes, teachers do not spot errors in pupils' written work. This includes errors in pupils' grammatical knowledge. Teachers make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in some lessons, but not routinely. As a result, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not get the help that they need.

Leaders have begun to make changes to address these weaknesses. Many of these changes are relatively new. In subjects such as mathematics, leaders set out the order of knowledge clearly. Younger pupils are beginning to benefit from a new approach to writing. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read typically receive well-targeted support. However, these changes are at an early stage, which limits the impact that can be seen for pupils.

Early years

Needs attention

Some children do not gain the knowledge they need as they move through the early years. This is because leaders have not set out what children need to learn, or in what order. This includes children in the provision for 2-year-olds. As a result, adults do not consistently plan activities that match what children need to learn. Adults make checks to find out what

children know and can do. However, they do not use this information routinely to work out what each child needs to learn next.

Interactions between adults and children are warm and encouraging. They help children to settle well. Adults do not consistently use these interactions to develop children's language. For example, adults miss opportunities to show children how to use new words. This limits some children's ability to build their vocabulary and communicate. Some children are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they could be.

Reading is prioritised from the start. Children learn the sounds that they need to read words accurately. Adults follow the early reading curriculum carefully. Adults give extra help to children who need it so that they can keep up with their reading.

Adults build positive partnerships with parents and carers. Through daily handovers and regular communication, adults help families feel involved in their children's education and care.

Inclusion

Needs attention

Leaders work appropriately with families and external professionals to understand pupils' additional needs and to identify any support that they require. However, staff do not consistently apply the strategies that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need. This includes pupils whose needs are set out in education, health and care plans. Sometimes, teachers do not adapt learning effectively so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum successfully. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not get the help that they need to learn well alongside their peers.

Leaders do not use additional funding precisely enough to make sure that disadvantaged pupils get the help that they need. In addition, leaders do not consistently set out what support disadvantaged pupils need to improve their learning. This means that leaders cannot check whether these pupils are getting the help that they need. As a result, gaps in knowledge for some disadvantaged pupils persist over time.

Staff provide supportive help for pupils who need assistance with their emotional wellbeing. Where this support is consistent, Pupils feel included, welcomed by their peers and make suitable progress from their starting points. Where alternative provision is used, leaders check that placements are appropriate and meet individual needs.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders do not know precisely how well the school is performing. This hinders their plans for bringing about improvement. Leaders are committed to improvement and know the school's key priorities. Despite this, leaders' plans for improvement do not set out clearly enough what they intend to achieve.

Governors are supportive and are beginning to meet their statutory duties. However, they do not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving or the impact of leaders' actions. Governors also do not have an accurate understanding of the progress made by

disadvantaged pupils and the school's performance in writing over time. This limits how well governors hold leaders to account.

Leaders are considerate of staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff, typically, describe leaders as approachable and visible. They value the support they receive. When concerns about pupils' welfare arise, leaders respond promptly. Leaders know their community well and are committed to the pupils they serve. Leaders provide training to help staff improve how they teach. However, this has not consistently led to improvements in teaching across the school.

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

Pupils at St Oswald's Church of England Primary School arrive happily each morning. They enjoy attending a caring, welcoming school with a friendly community atmosphere. Staff know pupils well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. Pupils feel secure and are welcomed cheerfully by those around them. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils are proud of their school and have a real sense of belonging.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Some particularly enjoy learning to read. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Some pupils struggle to write accurately and do not apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation consistently. Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, find it difficult to build on what they have learned. In the early years, some children are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they could be.

Pupils behave well and conduct themselves calmly around the school. They are polite, respectful and welcoming to visitors. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour are rare and not tolerated. When concerns arise, staff respond promptly. Leaders work with families to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.

Pupils at this school love to sing and perform at community events. They enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including clubs, sports and outdoor adventures. Older pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities. They take pride in representing their school and their community. These opportunities help pupils to develop the confidence they need for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that teachers consistently adapt the curriculum to enable vulnerable pupils to learn well.
- Leaders should make sure that teachers plan activities that build pupils' knowledge effectively and do not allow gaps in pupils' understanding to appear.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding, particularly in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Leaders should refine the early years curriculum so that adults can plan activities matched to what children need to learn to ensure that children are prepared well for Year 1.

- Governors should make sure that they are accurately informed about the school's performance and hold leaders to account precisely, particularly for pupil outcomes.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Alison Blair.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout the inspection. They also spoke to some parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys and the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Carlisle. Its last section 48 inspection was in June 2019.

Headteacher: Gill White

Lead inspector:
Mark Hazzard, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Rachael Alarcon, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

94
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

119
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)

17.07%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.19%
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

9.57%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	45%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	44%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	S

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	61%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	71%	S

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	61%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	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

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	22%	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	56%	62%	Close to average
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	44%	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	33%	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	22%	68%	-45 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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	44%	78%	-33 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	33%	80%	-46 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)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	15.2%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.9%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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