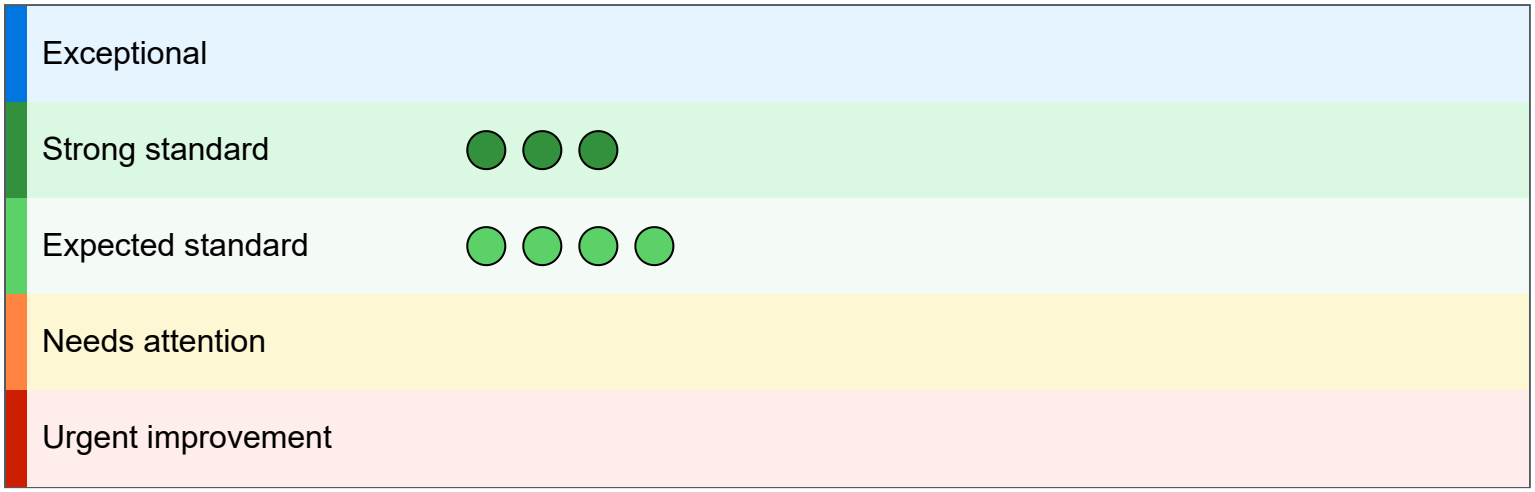
Church Eaton Primary School

Address: High Street, Church Eaton, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST20 0AG

Unique reference number (URN): 147425

Inspection report: 7 July 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 love coming to school and are ready to learn. However, due to small pupil numbers, one pupil absence can significantly affect the school's attendance and persistent absence rates. Leaders are therefore highly focused on targeting any pupil absence. Leaders routinely track pupil attendance data. If there is any decline, they immediately meet with parents. This ensures rapid improvement. The school engages very well with families and support services to get help as it is needed. The school keeps parents informed about attendance through regular updates and attendance letters. Leaders identify term-time holidays as a challenge. They have implemented effective strategies to discourage unauthorised absence. As a result of leaders' determined and proactive efforts, pupils attend school regularly.

The school is calm, orderly and purposeful. Pupils understand the school's high expectations and consistently meet them throughout the day. In lessons, pupils listen well and respond consistently and positively to teacher instruction. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and nurturing. This creates a culture where pupils feel safe, supported and cared for. During social times, pupils from all year groups play happily together. Younger children greatly benefit from the positive role models provided by older pupils. Bullying is rare. Pupils who need extra help with their behaviour receive timely and effective support. In most cases, pupils can successfully change their behaviour, without adult intervention.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders are determined that all pupils should be successful. Their culture of 'same destination, different route' is central to this. It ensures that pupils have their individual needs met. As a result, pupils benefit from a highly effective provision that promotes their learning and wellbeing.

Leaders identify pupils' needs swiftly and accurately. They use this information to make careful decisions about how best to overcome any barriers to learning that pupils have. Teaching is appropriate and well planned. Established routines help pupils to feel calm, secure and ready to learn. The school's inclusive checklist has been used particularly effectively to support this. This has been enhanced by extensive staff training on inclusive practice. As a result, vulnerable pupils learn well and thrive at this school.

Leaders and staff review the impact of support and rigorously monitor pupil progress. This is supported through the effective use of one-page profiles where staff skilfully adjust provision in response to pupils' changing needs. Staff build close relationships with families. They have effective partnerships with external professionals and readily welcome specialist advice. Pupils known to children's social care get the support they need, when they need it. Leaders target it successfully towards both learning and wellbeing. They use pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that they can access all that school has to offer, including out-of-school activities.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders' well-considered actions have led to significant progress since the last inspection. They have accurately identified key areas for improvement and taken quick action to address them. The improvements leaders have made are enabling pupils to learn more, do more and remember more over time. Leaders are determined to ensure that all pupils make strong progress across the curriculum. As a result, support for vulnerable pupils is particularly well considered.

Staff are well supported and work collaboratively. They feel valued and proud to work at this school. They benefit from high-quality professional development that is rooted in educational research. This is enhanced through the many opportunities they have to work with colleagues both within and beyond the school. Workload and wellbeing are seen as a high priority for leaders. Parents are increasingly positive about the school. They appreciate that staff know pupils well and care deeply about them.

Trustees and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's priorities. There are robust systems in place that enable them to provide an appropriate level of challenge for leaders. They are determined to ensure that the school builds on its successes to make sure its provision is consistently effective. The support provided by the trust adds valuable leadership capacity, expertise and quality assurance. This enables resources to be allocated effectively and support provided quickly to the school, as demonstrated in the development and rollout of the writing framework, which has had a notable impact on pupil outcomes at Church Eaton.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Typically, pupils achieve well. They can remember and show what they have learned across the curriculum. Pupils generally secure the key knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders act promptly when they do not. For example, they have successfully addressed issues with pupils' recall of times tables. This has resulted in improved outcomes over time.

Phonics teaching is a strength. As a result, above-average numbers of pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are less secure. A new programme has been introduced to address this, and it is too soon to see its full impact. As a result, in some subjects, errors in pupils' letter formation and spelling are not yet being consistently corrected.

Despite very small cohorts, outcomes are also improving over time for vulnerable pupils. This is as a result of the school's strong focus on inclusive practices.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Since the last inspection, leaders have put in place an ambitious new curriculum. It includes the key knowledge pupils need to learn. Learning in each subject is now carefully sequenced, with new knowledge building on what pupils already know.

With support from the trust, leaders have also changed their writing curriculum. Pupils are now supported to develop greater fluency through carefully planned steps that are used consistently throughout the school. This is reflected in improved pupil outcomes over time.

Leaders have also introduced a consistent teaching approach across all subjects. This provides a clear lesson structure and focus for staff and pupils. Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development opportunities. These support them to teach effectively and plan learning that helps pupils retain and remember what they have learned. In all subjects, staff make effective adaptations for vulnerable pupils. This enables them to access learning successfully and participate positively.

There has been a strong focus on the teaching of basic skills. This has had a positive impact on pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, in some subjects, pupils do not yet consistently apply and practise these basic skills, and misconceptions relating to them are not always identified. This sometimes leads to gaps in pupils' learning.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise the early years. They provide an environment that is calm, purposeful and well designed. The provision is well matched to children's needs and interests. Staff provide engaging activities that cover all areas of learning. This helps the children understand the world around them.

The curriculum places a sharp emphasis on language and communication. Leaders and staff make sure that key vocabulary is clearly identified. This is then consistently used throughout the day through high-quality interactions with children. For example, staff encourage children to reflect on and explain how they are improving their painting skills. As a result, children's language and communication skills are very well developed.

Activities and resources are carefully adapted to meet the needs of the children in this mixed-age class. This enables all pupils to learn successfully. Children concentrate well during teacher-led sessions. They show developing skills of cooperation and collaboration.

Children secure the phonics knowledge they need to successfully read age-appropriate texts. They are starting to use this knowledge to support and improve their writing. Children know and apply appropriate mathematical understanding. Most children leave the early years well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Personal development is well embedded across the school. Leaders have created a curriculum that positively shapes pupils' views, attitudes and character. It encourages pupils to work cooperatively with others and develop as responsible citizens. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils gain important knowledge. This includes work on staying safe, especially when online. A particular strength of the school's offer is the 'Personal Passport'. It is a carefully planned set of experiences that pupils complete during their time at Church Eaton. These experiences allow pupils to develop knowledge and skills in several wider curriculum areas.

Trusted adults throughout the school provide regular and effective pastoral support. Pupils feel confident in asking for help when they need it. This is because of the positive relationships that staff build with them. A wide range of targeted support ensures that pupils feel safe, valued and well supported. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about fundamental British values. They have a deep knowledge of them and know why they are important. Pupils also learn about different faiths and religions. However, the depth of pupils' knowledge in these areas is less secure. Leaders are clear they need to broaden pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.

Leaders offer a broad range of experiences. Trips and visits enrich the curriculum. They help pupils to develop socially, culturally, and emotionally. For example, pupils enjoy visits to the pantomime, a trip to Barmouth and a residential visit to Paris. This helps to make the wider curriculum more memorable and meaningful. Leaders carefully track participation in clubs, visits and enrichment activities. This ensures that vulnerable pupils benefit fully from the opportunities available. As a result, access to the school's wider curriculum offer is fair and inclusive.

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

Church Eaton is a tiny school with a big voice. Pupils are placed at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils are happy and safe here and strive to live up to the school's aim of being a warm and friendly place, where everyone knows and cares for each other.

Pupils enjoy lessons and classrooms buzz with purposeful learning. Lessons are calm and orderly, and behaviour is positive. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust adults to support them if they are worried about anything. They enjoy respectful and effective relationships with staff. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger children.

Staff have a deep understanding of the many barriers to learning and wellbeing their pupils face. These barriers are quickly addressed when pupils start school. Children in the early years settle quickly and follow routines. Nursery-aged children delight in the activities that are prepared for them. Across the school, pupils are seen as individuals who all work towards the same destination but may use different routes. As a result, pupils typically achieve well and are prepared effectively for their next stage of education.

Pupils benefit from a range of activities beyond the classroom. The residential visit to Paris was a particular highlight. Pupils take part in activities that push them outside their comfort zone. They learn to work as a team, within their class and across the school. These experiences develop confidence, independence and resilience. Many pupils take on additional responsibilities, including through the Eco-Council and Church Eaton Champions. They know the importance of these roles to the school and to themselves. Pupils feel a sense of pride from taking on these roles.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that misconceptions with basic skills, particularly in handwriting and spelling, are identified quickly and gaps in learning addressed consistently for all pupils, across all subjects.
- Leaders should build on the effective provision in early years to ensure that all children are consistently well prepared for their next stage in learning, particularly focusing on their transcription and writing skills.
- Leaders should strengthen, deepen and broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths and religions and the role they play within modern Britain.

About this inspection

This school is part of Staffordshire University Academies 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), Dr. James Capper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mary Walker.

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, a senior teacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the office support manager, the CEO, the director of education, trustees, governors from the local governing board, including the chair, parents and pupils during the inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: David Baker

Lead inspector:
Paul Newby, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Darryl Asbury, 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 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

73
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)

17.39%

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

2.74%

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

17.81%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

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	47%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	18%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	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)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	92%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	71%	Close to average

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	57%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	45%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	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		46%	
2024/25		47%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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		62%	
2024/25		63%	
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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
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		78%	
2024/25		78%	
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
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)	11.6%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	22.7%	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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