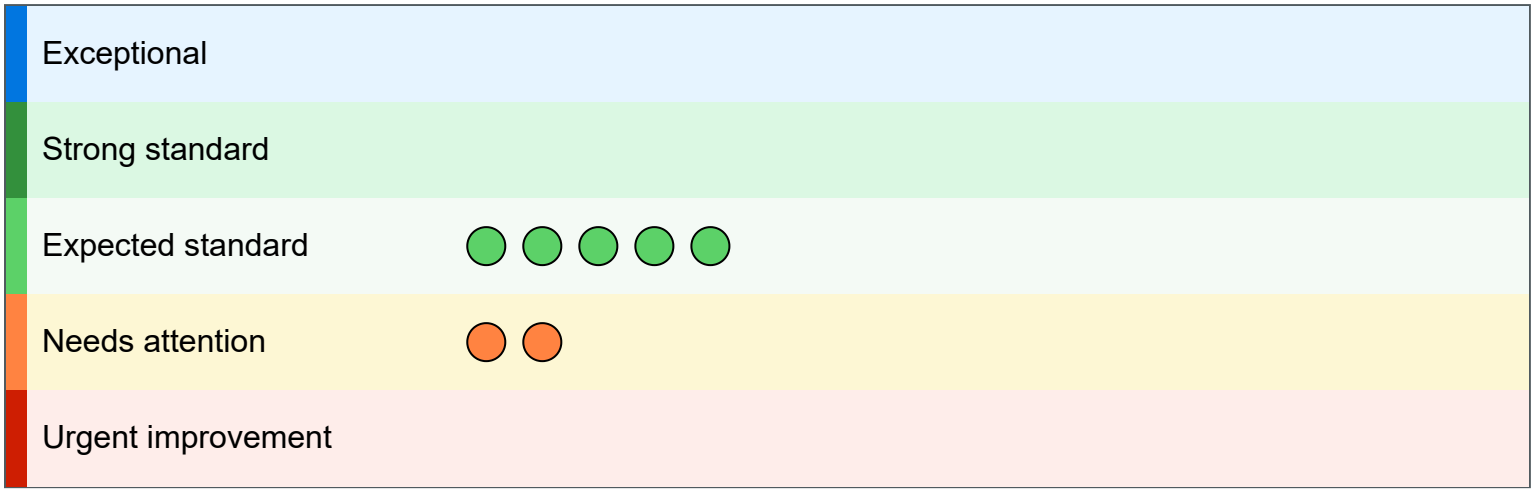
# St John's CofE Primary School, Dukinfield

**Address:** Westmorland Avenue, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 5JA

**Unique reference number (URN):** 106228

# Inspection report: 14 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.

# Expected standard

## Achievement

**Expected standard**

In reading, writing and mathematics, many pupils reach age-related expectations in national tests. From an early age, pupils build secure foundations in these subjects. They use this learning to support their work across the curriculum. Pupils develop their knowledge steadily over time. In lessons and discussions, they recall important learning and use it in new situations. Pupils speak confidently about what they know and can explain their ideas clearly. Reading is a positive feature of the school. Pupils read books that are well matched to their needs. They use their phonics knowledge to read with growing accuracy and fluency. This helps them take part in learning across different subjects. Leaders check the achievement of different groups of pupils carefully. Disadvantaged pupils receive support that helps them to learn successfully alongside their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable support and make appropriate progress. Across the curriculum, pupils gain the knowledge and skills expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, they are ready for secondary school and the next stage of their education.

## Attendance and behaviour

**Expected standard**

Leaders place a clear focus on improving attendance. They monitor attendance closely and identify concerns early. Staff work with families to understand the barriers some pupils face. They provide practical support and guidance when needed. Leaders give particular attention to disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, these pupils receive support that helps them attend as regularly as possible. Most pupils attend well and arrive ready to learn. Leaders' actions help pupils access learning, build friendships and take part in school life. Where attendance concerns arise, leaders respond promptly and work persistently to secure improvements. Their inclusive approach helps many pupils attend more regularly over time.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful to others. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive. This helps create a calm environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils understand the school's expectations and usually meet them well. They listen carefully, join in learning and work with purpose. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders support pupils who need help managing their behaviour. Staff make appropriate adaptations so that pupils with SEND can succeed alongside their peers. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They trust staff to deal with concerns quickly. Leaders do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or unkind behaviour. As a result, pupils feel valued and are able to focus on their learning.

## Early years

**Expected standard**

Children in the early years are welcomed into a nurturing and supportive environment where relationships help them settle quickly and develop confidence. Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps children gain the knowledge and skills needed for Year 1. Staff share a clear understanding of what children should learn. As a result, children experience a consistent approach across Nursery and Reception.

Communication, language and early reading are given high priority. Staff encourage children to talk, listen and share their ideas. They introduce new vocabulary and help children use it in different contexts. Staff check learning regularly and use this information to plan future activities. Children benefit from a range of experiences indoors and outdoors. These opportunities help them learn, explore and develop confidence.

Children settle quickly into routines and feel safe and cared for. They learn to work and play together. They follow expectations well and develop increasing independence. Relationships between adults and children are warm and supportive. Most children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. Children, including disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress from their starting points. Staff identify needs early and work closely with families to provide support.

Reading is promoted effectively at school and at home. Transitions into Reception and Year 1 are managed well. Children are safe and well cared for. Leaders ensure that all requirements for children's welfare are met. As a result, children are included fully and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

## Inclusion

**Expected standard**

Leaders make sure that pupils are included in the life of the school. They identify pupils' needs quickly and put support in place at an early stage. Staff know pupils well. They work closely with families to reduce barriers to learning, attendance and wellbeing. Leaders check the impact of support carefully and adapt it when needed. Leaders use additional funding effectively for pupils who are disadvantaged. This helps pupils access learning, enrichment activities and wider school experiences. As a result, these pupils take part fully in school life and typically achieve well. The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Leaders provide clear guidance for staff. Teachers adapt learning so that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers. Leaders review support regularly to ensure it remains effective. This helps these pupils make progress and take an active role in school life. Leaders work closely with external agencies and families to support pupils who are known, or previously known, to social care. They coordinate support well and ensure that help is provided when it is needed. 'The Nest' classroom provides support for pupils who need a different approach to learning. Leaders use this provision well to help pupils build confidence, develop independence and succeed in the mainstream classroom wherever possible. As a result, pupils facing a range of challenges feel valued, achieve well and are fully included in the school community.

## Personal development and wellbeing

**Expected standard**

Leaders place importance on pupils' personal development and wellbeing. The school's values, including those promoted through 'The St John's Way', help pupils learn how to treat others with kindness, respect and consideration. Pupils feel valued and cared for. They know that staff are available to help when needed. As a result, most pupils are happy, confident and secure in school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Through the personal development programme, they explore healthy relationships, managing emotions and making safe choices. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and offline. They know what

to do if something worries them and can identify trusted adults who will help. This contributes to pupils feeling safe and supported.

The school helps pupils understand the world beyond their local community. Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and backgrounds. They understand the importance of treating people fairly and with respect. Pupils gain an understanding of democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect. They learn about their rights and responsibilities and are prepared increasingly well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities. Many take part in clubs, sports, educational visits and performances. Others contribute as school councillors, reading ambassadors or playground leaders. These experiences help pupils develop confidence, teamwork and leadership skills. Leaders ensure that personal development opportunities are available to all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who need additional support are included fully in school life. Pastoral support helps pupils overcome barriers to wellbeing and participation. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they have the confidence, knowledge and personal qualities needed for the next stage of education.

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## Needs attention

### Curriculum and teaching

**Needs attention**

In some subjects, curriculum planning does not identify and sequence learning clearly enough. As a result, pupils sometimes learn content in the wrong order. This makes it harder for them to build securely on prior learning. Weaknesses in curriculum design also lead to variation in how staff deliver the curriculum across classes. As a result, pupils do not experience the intended curriculum consistently across the school. Some pupils who struggle with writing do not receive effective adaptations to support their learning. As a result, they do not always record their knowledge and understanding successfully. This limits how well some pupils access and demonstrate their learning. Staff generally demonstrate secure subject knowledge and create classrooms where pupils feel ready to learn. Pupils engage positively in lessons and contribute willingly. Leaders give reading a high priority. Staff teach phonics regularly, which helps many pupils become confident readers. Leaders have identified curriculum content that inspires pupils. They have also identified weaknesses in curriculum design and implementation. Leaders have begun to strengthen these areas through training and support. However, this work remains at an early stage and is not embedded securely across the school. Pupils gain knowledge and skills over time. However, inconsistencies in curriculum delivery limit achievement for some pupils. Leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, but practice remains variable across the school.

### Leadership and governance

**Needs attention**

Leaders have identified the school's key priorities for improvement, including curriculum development and greater consistency in teaching. They have introduced training and support to address these areas. However, this work is at an early stage and has not yet led

to consistent improvement across the school. Leaders have appropriate plans in place, but these are not embedded fully in day-to-day practice. As a result, weaknesses in curriculum planning and teaching remain. Pupils do not experience the curriculum consistently across all subjects.

Leaders have established a caring and inclusive culture that reflects the values of 'The St John's Way'. They understand the school's context and know pupils and families well. Staff value the support they receive and speak positively about leaders' consideration of wellbeing and workload. Professional development is linked to the school's improvement priorities. Leaders have created opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and skills. However, further work is needed to secure consistency in classroom practice.

Governors are committed to the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including those related to safeguarding. However, they do not receive sufficiently detailed information about pupils' achievement and the impact of leaders' actions. As a result, governors are not able to evaluate these aspects of the school's work closely enough. This limits their ability to provide challenge and support where improvement is needed.

Parents and carers value the school's nurturing approach and the positive relationships staff build with families. Leaders maintain constructive relationships with the wider community and are committed to addressing the school's current weaknesses. They have secured the confidence of many parents and continue to work closely with external partners to support school improvement.

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

At St John's, pupils enjoy being part of a caring and inclusive community. The school's vision, 'Love of God, Love of Neighbour, Love of Oneself', helps create a culture of kindness and respect. Pupils feel safe in school and trust staff to help them when needed. Positive relationships between pupils and adults contribute to a welcoming environment where everyone is valued. Behaviour is generally calm and purposeful in lessons and around the school. Most pupils understand the school's expectations and respond well to them. When concerns arise, such as bullying, staff deal with them promptly and fairly. Most pupils attend regularly and understand the importance of being in school each day.

Children in the early years settle quickly and make a confident start to school life. Across the school, pupils develop knowledge and skills from their starting points. In reading, writing and mathematics, many pupils achieve age-related expectations and sometimes exceed this. They enjoy learning and speak confidently about what they know. By the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for secondary school. However, in some subjects, learning does not always build as clearly as leaders intend. This means that pupils' experiences of learning are variable.

The school's inclusive approach helps pupils feel that they belong. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support that helps them take part fully in school life. A range of clubs, sports, visits and leadership opportunities helps pupils develop confidence and new interests. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play new instruments such as the ukulele. They are encouraged to attend choir competitions

and have visitors, like Freddy Fit, who promote health and wellbeing. As a result, pupils are proud of their school and enjoy contributing to its community.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen curriculum planning by identifying and sequencing the key knowledge children need to learn across all areas of learning, so that there is greater consistency in how the curriculum is implemented and pupils build learning securely over time.
- Leaders should ensure that learning is adapted effectively and consistently for pupils, so that they can access the curriculum successfully and build both knowledge and skills securely over time.
- Leaders, including governors, should further develop their analysis of school performance to refine and implement strategic approaches that strengthen their oversight of school improvement and enable them to provide appropriate support and challenge.

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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Paul Nuttall.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place from 14 July 2026 to 15 July 2026.

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, the assistant headteacher, staff, pupils and parents during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local diocese. They met the designated safeguarding lead, representatives of the governing body and a representative of local authority.

The inspector 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 Chester. Its last section 48 inspection took place on 22 May 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery provision.

At the time of the inspection, there were 329 pupils on roll.

Headteacher: Vicki Hewitt-Lee

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**Lead inspector:**
Andrew Scholz, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**
Bev Dolman, Ofsted Inspector
Dianne Holcroft, His Majesty's 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 14 July 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**327**
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

**315**
Close to 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)

## 23.40%
Close to 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**

## 1.53%
Below 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**

## 8.87%
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** | 83% | 61% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 83% | 62% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 87% | 61% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 79% | 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** | 93% | 74% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 96% | 75% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 91% | 74% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 91% | 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** | 85% | 72% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 83% | 72% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 89% | 72% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 83% | 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** | 92% | 73% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 93% | 74% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 93% | 73% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 89% | 73% | Above |

## 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** | 65% | 46% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 70% | 47% | Above |

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2023/24 (final)** | 78% | 46% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 50% | 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** | 81% | 62% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 90% | 63% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 89% | 62% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 67% | 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** | 65% | 59% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 70% | 59% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 78% | 58% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 50% | 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** | 81% | 60% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 80% | 61% | Above |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 89% | 59% | Above |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 75% | 59% | Above |

## 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** | 65% | 68% | -3 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 70% | 69% | 1 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 78% | 67% | 10 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 50% | 66% | -16 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** | 81% | 80% | 1 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 90% | 81% | 9 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 89% | 80% | 9 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 67% | 78% | -12 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** | 65% | 78% | -13 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 70% | 78% | -8 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 78% | 78% | 0 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 50% | 77% | -27 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** | 81% | 80% | 1 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 80% | 81% | -1 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 89% | 79% | 9 pp |

| Year | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2022/23 (final)** | 75% | 79% | -4 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)** | 3.6% | 5.2% | Below |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 3.1% | 5.5% | Below |
| **2022/23 (3 term)** | 3.3% | 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)** | 7.3% | 13.0% | Below |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 3.6% | 14.6% | Below |
| **2022/23 (3 term)** | 5.8% | 16.2% | Below |

## 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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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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