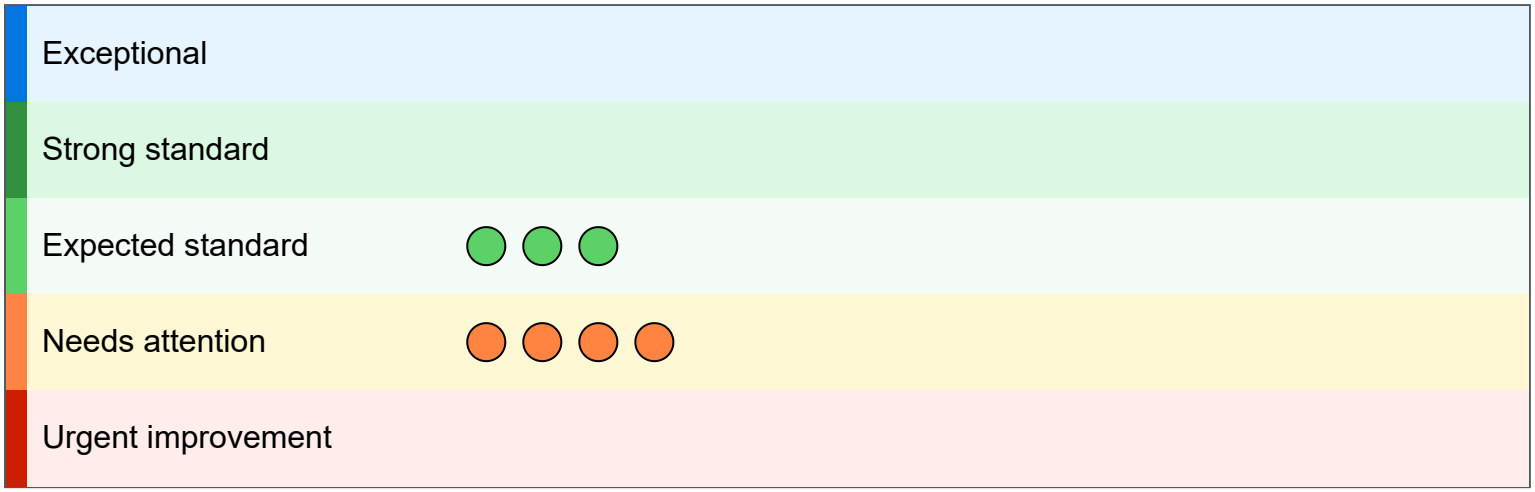
Fishponds CofE Primary School

Address: Fishponds Road, Fishponds, Bristol, Bristol, BS16 3UH

Unique reference number (URN): 138794

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.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have developed the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They responded swiftly when they identified weaknesses in the curriculum. The curriculum now prioritises basic skills and sequentially builds knowledge across a broad range of subjects. Leaders have implemented a consistent approach to teaching that focuses on making sure that pupils learn the agreed knowledge at each stage to prepare them for what comes next. As a result of effective teaching, pupils' achievement is improving.

Teachers prioritise teaching younger pupils essential foundational knowledge such as communication, reading, handwriting, spelling, punctuation and basic number knowledge. In reading, writing and mathematics lessons, teachers are skilled at adapting their approach to make sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, keep up with the learning. Some older pupils have underdeveloped foundational skills. Teachers identify such gaps in learning and take action to eliminate them.

Some pupils join the school with low starting points. Staff quickly identify the gaps in their knowledge and prioritise teaching the knowledge and skills needed. For example, they teach pupils who speak English as an additional language how to read using phonics.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders in the trust and in school fully understand the importance of getting provision in the early years right. The changes leaders have made to the curriculum and teaching in recent years have led to notable improvements in the quality of education and to children’s achievement.

In the Reception Year, children learn the expectations, rules and routines of school life. They develop warm, trusting relationships with staff, which help them feel safe, happy and excited about learning.

The Reception curriculum identifies clearly the knowledge that children must secure before starting Year 1. It ensures that children acquire the broad vocabulary needed to lay the foundations for future learning. Effective teaching of phonics, letter formation and number gives children the building blocks of knowledge for reading, writing and mathematics.

All adults consistently model the precise language they want children to learn, and they ensure that children use it in their conversations. Staff give well-targeted support to children who need to catch up, such as those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that all children learn what is intended. As a result, children achieve well and are ready for the move to Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders and staff provide a caring, nurturing environment that helps pupils feel safe, welcome, secure and keen to get on with their learning.

Leaders are determined that financial disadvantage, social deprivation, not speaking English fluently or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) must not be a barrier to success. They quickly identify the barriers a pupil might face. Leaders work in partnership with external agencies, such as children's social care or the virtual school, to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Pupils in the Reef, the special educational needs unit, and the school's inclusion base, the Corals, experience a curriculum that is well matched to their needs. When, occasionally, a pupil's needs cannot be met by the school, leaders arrange suitable alternative provision.

Teachers are well trained to understand pupils' needs and to make adaptations in class to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, have full access to the school's curriculum.

Leaders have a well-informed pupil premium strategy to support disadvantaged pupils. Staff know how to implement it for their pupils. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving. Many disadvantaged pupils also have SEND. The school identifies their starting points and the extra help they need to catch up.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

In recent years, too many pupils have moved on to secondary school lacking the knowledge they need to be successful, as reflected in published outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils in particular have not achieved well in national assessments.

Pupils' knowledge is not sufficiently deep in some aspects of the curriculum. For example, they are not confident to think scientifically or to understand how historians work. Nevertheless, pupils are learning increasingly well across subjects. For example, older pupils can describe how animals adapt to their environments or explain why Edward Colston is a controversial figure.

Achievement, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is improving rapidly because teaching is now effective. This is better preparing pupils for their next steps. Pupils' work demonstrates the increasingly secure foundational knowledge that is needed to read, write and calculate fluently. Pupils joining the school who speak English as an additional language catch up because they quickly learn the fundamentals of speaking, reading and writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Leaders' work to improve attendance has not made enough difference. Poor attendance limits many pupils' achievement. Leaders have identified specific reasons for poor attendance. The reasons and patterns in absences have informed leaders' renewed attendance strategy. Leaders' work is beginning to make a difference to the attendance of

some pupils, but the gains are too small. Too many pupils arrive late to school and they miss the calm start to the day that settles others into school.

Some pupils do not behave well. This is particularly the case at playtimes. While some pupils participate in sporting activities at playtime, such as football, basketball or cricket, other pupils would appreciate different activity choices.

Bullying is largely dealt with. When pupils raise concerns, staff work to resolve the issue. However, leaders' efforts to eliminate discriminatory behaviour or harassment have not worked well enough. Some girls have experienced negative behaviour or misogynistic language from boys. Some pupils say they hear racist and homophobic language.

In lessons, pupils follow instructions, work hard and enjoy learning. Those who find school life challenging are well supported to follow the rules.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders have not yet secured the expected standard in pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development. Pupils' achievement is rising but remains below where it should be. Leaders know this and have begun to act. Their actions to eliminate discriminatory or derogatory language are not strategic enough to prevent such behaviour recurring. The school's personal development programme does not develop pupils' understanding of respect well enough to prepare them fully for life beyond school.

Since the school joined the Lighthouse Schools Partnership in January 2025, the trust and senior leaders in the school have brought about significant change to the curriculum, the quality of teaching and early years provision. Leaders have also improved the school's procedures for inclusion.

Trust executives provide effective advice and support to the school. Trustees have a clear, strategic vision for the school's future and its positive contribution to the wider trust. Local governing board members have a well-informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further work. This group brings a positive combination of support and challenge that helps balance sustainable improvement with staff welfare.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported regarding their workload and wellbeing. They value the professional learning programme provided by senior leaders, the trust and external providers. It has been central to the improvements in the curriculum, teaching and inclusion.

Parents generally recognise the positive changes in the school and many who responded to Ofsted Parent View would recommend the school to others.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Leaders' actions to promote pupils' personal development lack cohesion. The personal development programme does not ensure some pupils are fully prepared for life beyond school. It does not ensure pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values well enough. For example, some pupils have an undeveloped understanding of respect. A

few do not understand that racist or homophobic language is discriminatory and harassing to others. A few boys use misogynistic language towards girls.

Pupils describe local issues that worry them, such as gang activity. Leaders respond to these concerns by speaking to pupils individually or in groups, or by talking about it in assembly. However, their approach is not strategic enough to fully prepare pupils to manage their concerns.

The relationships and sex education and health programme covers essential themes, such as healthy relationships. However, it is not taught effectively. Some pupils have limited understanding of issues such as consent. They learn about online safety, but a few lack the responsible attitude needed to use the internet appropriately.

A range of enrichment activities is designed to develop pupils' talents and interests. This includes residential trips, creative workshops, sports clubs, guest speakers and opportunities to sing and perform in their community. Leaders intend for the offer to benefit all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are largely successful, but there is more to do to ensure that some girls benefit fully from the activities on offer at playtimes.

Pupils' wellbeing is a top priority for staff. The comprehensive approach to pastoral care helps pupils navigate their emotions and manage the challenges of school life. Pupils feel safe and cared for.

Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. They enjoy learning about the global heritage represented by the school's diverse population. They value learning about the religious practices, food, music and dance of different cultures.

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

This Church of England school is welcoming, nurturing and inclusive. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those in the special educational needs (SEN) unit and the school's inclusion base, feel safe, happy and ready to learn.

Pupils are benefiting from improvements to the curriculum and teaching that have been made since the school joined the Lighthouse Schools Partnership. However, too many pupils do not benefit fully from these improvements because they do not attend regularly. Others miss the welcome at the start of the day because they arrive late.

Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who are known to social care and others who face barriers to success are well provided for. Staff are skilled at meeting their needs in class and in the wider aspects of school life.

Pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is improving. Children in the early years achieve well and are ready for the move to Year 1. Pupils in the SEN unit and inclusion base make suitable progress from their starting points. Standards are rising across the school. Nevertheless, over time, too many pupils have not achieved well in national tests and assessments.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities that interest them and widen their experience. However, the school is not doing enough to prepare pupils for their next steps. Some pupils lack respect and empathy towards others. They do not understand the need to be kind or tolerant to each other. As a result, some pupils experience negative comments targeted at who they are, how they look or other personal characteristics, for example, for being girls.

Next steps

- Leaders should provide a personal development programme that fully develops pupils' understanding of respect for all, regardless of their characteristics, so that they are prepared for life beyond school. In addition, leaders should take swift and effective action to ensure that pupils do not use discriminatory language, including racist, homophobic and misogynistic comments.
- Leaders should strengthen the school's work to promote high rates of attendance to ensure it has the intended impact, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders should ensure that the effective teaching practice they have established is more consistent so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve as well as they should in national tests.
- Leaders should ensure that their actions fully address the weaknesses in pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development so that these aspects of the school's work meet the expected standard.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gary Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adele Hayman.

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 senior leadership team and other staff members. They also spoke with the director of primary education for the trust, the CEO, the chair of the trust board and members of the local governing body during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection was in October 2019.

The school includes provision for 8 pupils with speech, language and communication needs in the Reef special educational needs unit. The school also provides for 10 other pupils with

special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in its internally resourced Corals base. Other pupils with SEND are educated in mainstream classes.

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision. It does not use any unregistered alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The Lighthouse Schools Partnership became the responsible body in January 2025. Before that, the responsible body was the Diocese of Bristol Multi-Academy Trust.

Headteacher: Michelle Omoboni

Lead inspector:
Sandy Hayes, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:
Richard Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Laing, 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

330
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

420

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)

36.67%
Above 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

5.15%
Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

29.70%
Well above 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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	51%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

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	65%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

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)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	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	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	17%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	41%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	54%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	49%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	39%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	53%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (final)	17%	69%	-52 pp
2023/24 (final)	41%	67%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 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	54%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	35%	81%	-46 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-9 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	78%	-14 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	49%	78%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	39%	78%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	53%	77%	-24 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	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	48%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	79%	-26 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)	6.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	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)	19.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	23.1%	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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