

St John's Church of England Primary School

Address: 121-147 Orts Road, Reading, 121-147 Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3JN

Unique reference number (URN): 142735

Inspection report: 14 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ 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. They want to attend and enjoy being part of this diverse and caring community. There are consistently ambitious standards for pupils' attendance. Leaders have a clear, staged approach to managing attendance that is easily understood by all stakeholders. As a result, attendance rates for all groups of pupils are in line with or above national averages. Leaders respond quickly to pupils who have occasional absences. This means that persistent absence is reduced. Staff successfully support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care to attend well. Bespoke support for severely absent pupils has rapidly improved attendance.

Behaviour is underpinned by the school's highly inclusive culture. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour across the school. Pupils are calm, respectful and well mannered. There is a harmonious atmosphere across the school. Staff use a range of strategies to help pupils manage their emotions successfully. As a result, pupils listen carefully, sustain attention and focus on their learning. Pupils know that they do not need to worry about bullying. Staff swiftly address rare incidents of unkind behaviour using the school's well-established systems. Leaders' robust knowledge of individual pupils' needs allows them to adapt the approach accordingly.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a highly inclusive culture. They know pupils and their families well. As a result, any emerging or changing needs are quickly identified and swiftly responded to. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of pupils' individual circumstances and barriers to learning. They ensure that staff have an equally robust awareness of these needs.

Leaders maintain high expectations for all pupils and establish strategies to consistently enhance the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and wellbeing.

Additional funding is used strategically to remove barriers to learning and increase participation in wider opportunities. Leaders evaluate the impact of this funding carefully. They ensure barriers are reduced through effective adaptations, targeted interventions and inclusive classroom practice. The result of this is sustained improvements in pupils' academic progress, social development and engagement.

Staff make thoughtful adaptations to teaching based on their knowledge of each pupil. This precise support helps pupils access the curriculum successfully. Pupil voice, parental involvement and multi-agency working further strengthen personalised support. As such, pupils are thoroughly supported both in school and in preparation for their next stage of education.

Personal development and wellbeing is woven through all aspects of the school's work. Leaders provide an extensive programme of personal development that is carefully shaped around the school's context. They track pupils' participation rigorously to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who face other barriers to learning benefit fully from the school's offer.

Pastoral care is central to the school's ethos. Leaders and staff form trusting relationships with families and know their pupils well. Consequently, families seek and accept help when it is needed. Leaders consider their context carefully when planning clubs, trips and visits. They work to understand the interests and needs of pupils and families. As a result, pupils have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of clubs and activities, including cricket, cooking and art.

Leaders plan the personal, social and health education curriculum well, and staff teach it consistently well across the school. Barriers to learning are quickly addressed. This helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of what they have learned. Pupils understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They learn about the concept of consent and can describe the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships or friendships. Leaders have made changes to the curriculum that reflect specific risks faced by pupils in the local area. As a result, pupils can recall in detail how to keep themselves safe around water, construction sites and online.

The impact of the programme of personal development is clear. Pupils confidently discuss equality issues, actively challenge prejudice and demonstrate respect for diversity in their everyday interactions. They have a secure understanding of British values. Pupils can articulate how these values shape daily life in school and what life would be like without them. They participate in democratic processes, debate ethical issues confidently and show genuine respect for differing viewpoints. As a result of leaders' work, pupils thrive personally, benefit fully from the school's provision and leave well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils across the school generally achieve well in national checks and tests. Results in the Year 4 multiplication tests are above average. This ensures that pupils can access further mathematical learning effectively. Leaders have prioritised early reading. Pupils quickly learn the skills they need to read fluently.

Typically, pupils make secure progress through the curriculum. They learn what leaders intend. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to make progress from their starting points. Generally, pupils remember key information from their learning and make links when they encounter new knowledge and concepts.

Work in pupils' books is broadly in line with expectations, although some gaps in basic knowledge remain. Leaders have plans in place to address this to ensure that pupils are consistently well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have carefully designed a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care.

Teaching is generally effective across the school. It is characterised by calm learning environments and positive relationships. Teachers have the secure subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum in the phases or year groups they are responsible for. They are ambitious and ensure that pupils learn and apply appropriate vocabulary. Teachers generally identify and check pupils' understanding. However, some limited variability in teaching approaches means not all pupils secure knowledge as deeply as they could. Leaders recognise this and have secure plans in place to address it.

Staff make well-considered adaptations to teaching across subjects. As a result, pupils with SEND and those who face other barriers to learning participate successfully in lessons alongside their peers.

Leaders are refining aspects of the curriculum and teaching to strengthen pupils' learning further.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in early years. Warm, caring adults support them to settle in quickly and understand the routines of school life. Children are curious, eager to learn and keen to share their learning with others.

The early years curriculum is designed to meet the needs of children who attend. Leaders place a high priority on the development of children's speech, language and communication. Staff quickly identify any additional needs that children have. Leaders ensure that staff have the training needed to help them address these needs effectively, for example through additional support. This ensures that children can access the curriculum and learn the intended concepts, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children develop confidence in speaking and listening through regular discussion, carefully chosen stories and purposeful interactions with staff. Staff often model language effectively. Leaders have a firm focus on the importance of reading in the early years. Children develop a love of reading and enjoy sharing books. They use their phonics knowledge to work out new words. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Staff build positive, trusting relationships with parents and carers. They work closely with families so children feel looked after, safe and ready to learn. Families value this care.

Leaders demonstrate a strong sense of moral purpose in the work they carry out. They have a deep and detailed understanding of their pupils, families and local context. Leaders know the school's strengths and precisely identify priorities for improvement. Leaders place pupils' best interests at the centre of decision-making. Actions taken improve the experiences of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care.

Governors, trustees and trust leaders know the school's strengths and challenges well. The trust ensures that governors have the training, skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their duties and statutory responsibilities. Governors and trustees use their robust understanding of the school to provide targeted support for leaders. This is helping the school to improve further.

Leaders promote a culture of mutual respect, professional trust and care. Staff feel valued and supported. They have the skills and resources they need to carry out their roles successfully. Leaders support staff wellbeing effectively and actively find appropriate ways to reduce workload while maintaining high standards.

Staff benefit from a structured programme of professional learning. They access a wide range of high-quality training linked to school improvement priorities. This training enables staff to support pupils effectively.

Parents speak highly of the school. They are grateful for the work staff do that makes their children feel welcome, happy and safe at school.

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

St John's is a vibrant and welcoming place, where pupils are valued and nurtured. Pupils are curious to learn, keen to play and happy to talk. Leaders and staff form positive relationships with families. This helps to create a cohesive community. Pupils are confident that they are safe and well looked after. As a result, they are keen to attend school and enjoy their learning. Pupils know their voices are heard. They are given meaningful opportunities to share their views and impact changes in the school.

Pupils display consistently high standards of behaviour in class and around the school. They listen to adults, follow instructions and look after their friends. Adults swiftly address any incidents of unkindness. As a result, bullying is rare. The youngest children in school are taught to play together and share equipment. They understand risks and build resilience in the early years environment. Older pupils enjoy the responsibilities they have, such as being house captains and school council members. They speak maturely and articulately about diversity, difference and inclusion.

Most pupils benefit from effective teaching. Leaders support staff to identify barriers to learning. Staff make appropriate adaptations to learning and activities. As such, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care make good progress from their starting points. By the time

they leave Year 6, most pupils have secured the knowledge they need to be ready to move on to secondary school.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and trips provided for them, such as archery, cricket and computing. They relish being encouraged to try new things, such as residential trips or performing in concerts. Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to these carefully selected opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school.
 - Leaders should continue their work to ensure that any gaps in foundational knowledge are identified and addressed swiftly so all pupils achieve as well as they can.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Oxford Diocesan Schools 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), Sharon Mullins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kathy Winrow.

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

This inspection took place on 14 and 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 acting headteacher, the senior leadership team and other school staff. An inspector met with the chair of trustees, representatives of the local governing board, governance professionals and the CEO from the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. Inspectors also met with a representative of the diocese. Inspectors engaged with pupils throughout the inspection. They spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to parents' and staff surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The acting headteacher, Cameron Purvis, took up his role in November 2025. A number of staff have moved into acting leadership roles since the previous inspection.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Martina Parsons

Lead inspector:

Louise Quinell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Gareth Flemington, His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Marshall, Ofsted Inspector

Sonia Mallick, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

462

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

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)

20.67%

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

1.73%

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

15.15%

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

Above 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	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	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)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	87%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	40%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	41%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	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	55%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	40%	68%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	41%	69%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-29 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	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	59%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	53%	78%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	78%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-20 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	65%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	79%	-8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	63%	79%	-17 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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	14.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	19.2%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention ●

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

Urgent improvement ●

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

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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