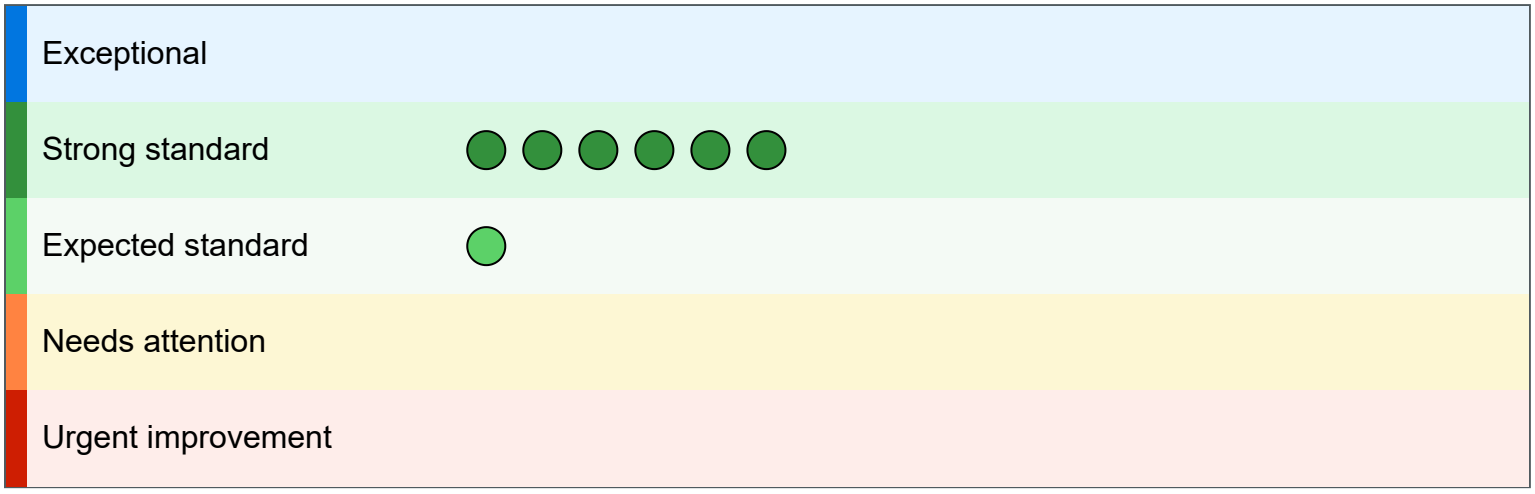
St John's Meads Church of England Primary School

Address: Rowsley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7XS

Unique reference number (URN): 147712

Inspection report: 22 September 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

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve highly in this school. They develop detailed knowledge across the whole curriculum, which enables them to apply their learning in different contexts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as pupils who face other barriers to learning, build securely on what they already know. They progress rapidly through the curriculum from their starting points.

Pupils secure the required foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. This is evident from the early years and is reflected in the school's published outcomes. For instance, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in tests at the end of Year 6 is above national averages. Right from the early years, leaders ensure that children quickly acquire phonics knowledge so that they can read confidently and accurately. When needed, leaders take swift action to help any pupils who fall behind.

Across the school, pupils develop confidence, resilience and independence. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders prioritise attendance and punctuality so that pupils benefit fully from the high-quality education and wider experiences the school offers. They understand why some pupils do not attend as regularly as they could and monitor attendance closely. Leaders respond swiftly when rates begin to decline. They work effectively with families and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly. Persistent absence is carefully tracked and is close to the national average. Pupils enjoy school and embrace opportunities to be successful. This means that most want to attend school regularly. Leaders’ determined and compassionate approach has resulted in rapid and notable improvements in attendance and persistent absence rates for key groups of pupils.

Pupils behave very well. Staff and pupils understand and consistently uphold leaders' high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are friendly, polite, respectful and enthusiastic. They enjoy their lessons, and attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils' highly positive conduct is reflected in the fact that suspensions for unacceptable behaviour are incredibly rare. Bullying, discrimination and other forms of harassment are not tolerated. On the rare occasions that they occur, staff deal with them quickly, consistently and effectively. Positive relationships and well-established routines help to create a happy, safe and harmonious school culture and environment. The school's high-quality pastoral care ensures that those pupils who need help to manage their emotions are supported very effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders continually reflect on the quality of the curriculum and how well it is taught. They ensure that it is meticulously designed and meets the needs of all learners. The curriculum is logically ordered to develop pupils' knowledge over time. Staff make thoughtful links

across subject areas. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding as they progress through the carefully crafted curriculum.

Leaders focus on ensuring that pupils secure strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics and are ready to move on to the next stage. Early reading and phonics are taught very well. Pupils learn to read quickly and with increasing fluency. Pupils are confident communicators and readily use subject-specific vocabulary when discussing their learning.

Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum well. Staff check pupils' understanding regularly and are alert to any misconceptions. When pupils develop misunderstandings, targeted teaching addresses these so that gaps in knowledge are closed quickly. Staff make appropriate adjustments and adaptations so that all pupils learn the same curriculum, regardless of any barriers that they may face. From Year 1 to Year 6, teaching is consistently effective. As a result, these pupils benefit from a particularly high-quality education that prepares them extremely well for future learning.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Leaders keep a sharp focus on ensuring that effective inclusive practice is embedded across the school. High-quality training for staff helps to achieve this. For instance, staff have a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that pupils may face. This helps staff to identify and assess pupils' needs swiftly. When pupils find learning challenging, they benefit from high-quality, inclusive teaching. Leaders also make effective use of precise targets and adapted resources when needed. As a result, pupils with barriers to learning or wellbeing, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well alongside their peers.

Leaders regularly assess the impact of the interventions and support that they put into place. They check pupils’ progress rigorously. When needed, staff adapt support to ensure that gaps in pupils' learning close quickly. Leaders work effectively with external specialists to secure additional expertise when required. This considered, proactive approach helps pupils flourish. Over time, pupils with barriers to their learning or wellbeing develop independence and the skills and knowledge to achieve well.

Leaders draw on research to inform the way that they use additional funding, including the pupil premium grant. The positive impact of this is evident in pupils' academic achievement, as well as their emotional, social and communication development.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders are passionate about, and proud of, the school’s achievements. The school’s culture and ethos create a 'family feel' for pupils and staff. Staff are well supported and share leaders’ commitment to continued improvement. They work together to help pupils quickly overcome gaps in their learning across the curriculum. Staff appreciate leaders’ consideration of their workload and wellbeing. Parents and carers speak positively about their children’s experiences. The school contributes positively to local community events, which helps foster pupils’ sense of belonging.

Leaders' detailed plans for improvement identify ambitious actions to improve teaching and standards even further. They are restless for even greater success. Staff benefit from training to develop curriculum design and teaching that is informed by research. They use this effectively. Staff consistently follow a highly effective approach to teaching that ensures pupils are very well prepared for secondary school.

Support from the trust is highly effective. Trust leaders identify exact areas for improvement across distinct aspects of the school's work. The trust's support helps to ensure that teachers are expert at adapting their teaching to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work effectively with other schools to share good practice and further strengthen provision for pupils.

Members of the interim executive board (transition board) and trustees use their comprehensive understanding of the school's performance to challenge and support leaders effectively. Clear reporting arrangements help trustees make informed decisions that contribute to maintaining a high quality of education. Members of the interim executive board are knowledgeable about the school. They use this understanding well to explore areas such as behaviour and attendance.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have established a highly effective programme of personal development. Pupils progressively build their knowledge, understanding and confidence. They develop the personal, social and emotional skills that they need to succeed. Special events, including sporting and cultural visits, broaden pupils' horizons and help them develop confidence and independence and to become aspirational for their futures.

Staff use their knowledge of pupils, their families and the community to carefully tailor what pupils learn. For example, liaising closely with parents and carers, leaders ensure that pupils acquire a detailed understanding of the risks associated with mobile phones and online activity. The relationships and health education curriculum helps pupils learn about positive relationships and how to stay physically and emotionally healthy. They recognise the importance of respecting people's similarities and differences. When appropriate, leaders adapt the curriculum so that pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities, understand risks and know how to keep themselves safe. Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils know how to seek help should they need it.

Leaders harness support from the local community to further enrich pupils' experiences. For example, parents are invited to share and celebrate their cultures to help deepen pupils' understanding of the world. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental British values, including democracy, mutual respect and tolerance. Activities such as voting for school councillors help pupils understand how these values work in practice. Pupils leave Year 6 well equipped to make positive contributions to life in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from leadership opportunities. Roles such as worship leaders, green team members and school councillors help pupils develop maturity, responsibility and independence. Older pupils support younger pupils through the school's buddy system. Pupils appreciate the caring culture that helps to ensure that everyone is welcome in the school.

Leaders rigorously monitor participation in clubs and enrichment activities and remove any barriers that might prevent pupils from taking part. As a result, pupils participate fully in activities such as athletics, football, choir and dance.

Expected standard

Early years **Expected standard**

Children get off to a great start in the early years and achieve well. Staff provide high-quality interactions that develop children's ability to communicate effectively. Staff model rich language, extend conversations and carefully introduce new vocabulary. That said, occasionally, they do not maximise opportunities to engage children in such interactions.

The curriculum is well designed and clearly sequenced. It supports children's development across all areas of learning, with communication and language at its core. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides clarity about the foundational knowledge and skills that children should learn to be ready for Year 1.

Reading is prioritised. Phonics teaching is systematic and follows the expectations and routines set out by the trust. When needed, suitable support is put into place to help children keep up. Most children secure the phonics knowledge they need by the end of Reception. This helps children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Staff identify any additional needs that children may have early. The provision is continually reviewed in response to children's needs. Staff track children's progress closely and refine learning environments to maximise engagement. Transition arrangements are thorough and help children move into Year 1 with confidence. Staff engage effectively with parents and carers, who speak positively of the support provided.

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

Pupils enter St John's Meads Church of England Primary School chatting with friends and excited about the day ahead. From the early years onwards, they quickly settle into routines and enjoy learning. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils achieve highly in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils represent the school with maturity and take pride in their achievements. Older pupils embrace leadership opportunities. They have a positive influence on the school community through the care and encouragement they show to younger children. This helps to create an environment in which pupils care about each other. Bullying is very rare. When it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils feel happy, safe and valued.

Pupils behave incredibly well. They rise to leaders' high expectations and show respect for one another and for adults. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. As a result,

classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing receive highly effective support that helps them to succeed. Pupils attend school regularly, keen to embrace all that it offers.

Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. Pupils trust that staff care about them and will listen to any concerns they may have. Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried or need help.

Pupils enjoy learning. They speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about topics such as rationing during the Second World War or how to conduct a fair test in science. Highly effective teaching ensures that pupils build a deep, rich knowledge in each subject. Pupils are supported to develop aspirations for their futures.

Pupils benefit from a multitude of memorable experiences. School trips, residential visits and extra-curricular activities enrich their education and strengthen their sense of belonging. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities on offer. They relish opportunities to make a positive contribution to school life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently maximise opportunities for engaging children in the early years in high-quality interactions, so that children's language consistently develops in line with their expectations.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should continue to refine their approach to curriculum implementation, so that they achieve and sustain an exceptional standard of teaching that has a transformational impact on the achievement of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Diocese of Chichester Academy 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), Mark Talbot, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Reverend Dr Jack Dunn.

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

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 September 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 executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders, as well as trust leaders, including the CEO and director of education. Inspectors also spoke with staff, pupils and parents and carers.

The inspectors 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 Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection was 22 May 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Head of School: Lucy Pomeroy

Executive Headteacher: Beruk Berhane

Lead inspector:
Ulric Neblett-Leigh, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Sukwinder Samra, 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

162
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: 268

School capacity

218
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)

14.81%
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: 26.5%

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

1.23%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.14%
Above 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	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	81%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	53%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	78%	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	18%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	36%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	18%	68%	-49 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	55%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
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	45%	78%	-32 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	80%	-43 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.8%	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)	13.7%	13.0%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.8%	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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