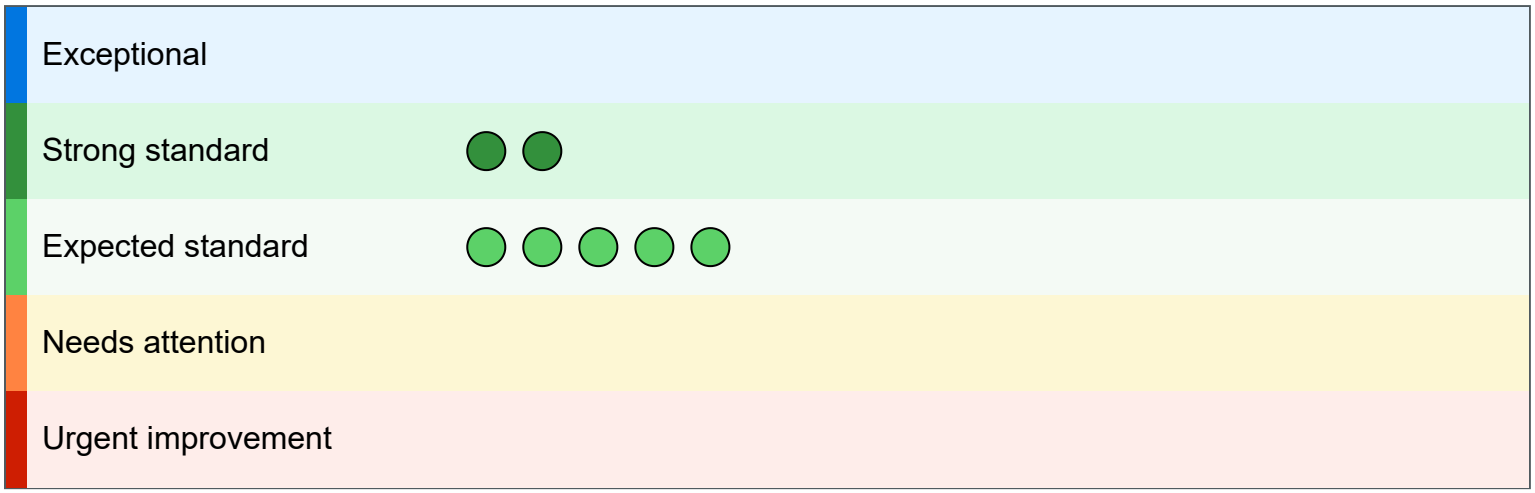
St John and St Francis Church School

Address: Westonzoyland Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 5BP

Unique reference number (URN): 139338

Inspection report: 6 October 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

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the early years. They are highly knowledgeable and use their expertise well to ensure that this vision is fully realised in children's day-to-day experiences.

The early years curriculum is well designed and sequenced. It makes clear the important knowledge and skills that children need to learn and when. Leaders skilfully shape the design of the curriculum to swiftly address any gaps that arise, such as speech and language and fine motor control.

The environment both in and outside the classroom is vibrant and language rich. Staff are highly attentive to the basic skills that children need to learn. They ensure children adopt the correct pencil grip, develop a clear understanding of early number, learn the sounds they need to read words and use wide and ambitious vocabulary. Consistent and high-quality interactions with adults support this further. For example, children talk confidently about the ingredients of a fruit pie and describe the importance of hand washing and tooth brushing to remove 'germs'.

Adults provide highly effective support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They adapt learning activities successfully, which means these children access the same curriculum as their peers.

Staff know the children well. Relationships between children and adults are extremely positive. Children quickly develop a sense of belonging because they feel safe and cared for.

Children achieve well and are well prepared for Year 1.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's personal development programme is an integral part of its work. Leaders ensure that the school's values, wider opportunities and community context are woven into the offer. They have put in place a comprehensive personal, social and health education, and relationships and sex education and health education curriculum. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they know how the rule of law helps everyone to be safe. Pupils confidently talk about the differences between religions, such as Judaism and Humanism. They are clear that they should not judge others for their beliefs. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of money, using terms like 'budget' and 'debt'. They recognise the importance of regular exercise and sleep which helps them to be physically and mentally fit. An extensive careers programme which utilises local employers raise pupils' future aspirations.

Pupils talk with maturity about body changes and understand why consent is important in any relationship. They know that families that are different to their own should be treated

equally and with respect. Pupils learn about risks, such as how to stay safe online and the dangers of knife crime.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils talk positively about the way in which trained staff help them to understand their emotions and to talk about their worries. Pupil ‘wellbeing ambassadors’ take their roles seriously, helping others who need time to talk about their feelings.

Pupils develop their character in a variety of different ways. They raise money for charities, by organising and running coffee afternoons, or sing with the choir in the community. Pupils talk about how their different ‘teams’ develop a sense of belonging.

Leaders track pupils’ participation in enrichment activities, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to ensure that no pupil misses out. Consequently, pupils enjoy opportunities to develop their creative talents, such as learning languages, taking part in sporting competitions and learning to play a musical instrument, such as ukulele.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils’ achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is in line with national averages. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving. Leaders’ work to refine the teaching of phonics is resulting in more pupils being successful in the Year 1 phonic screening check than in the past. Overall, pupils are well prepared for future learning.

Pupils recall their learning well. For example, in mathematics, they use subject specific vocabulary such as ‘remainders’ when describing their work on division. Pupils confidently explain the importance of artefacts in history and use terms such as ‘variables’ when carrying out experiments on circuits in science. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make positive progress from their starting points.

Typically, pupils develop the important basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils’ communication skills are a real strength. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge well to read words. However, leaders recognise the need to further improve pupils’ handwriting and transcription skills so that more pupils write accurately and fluently across all subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that regular attendance is a priority. They communicate this clearly and regularly to parents and carers through school newsletters and the sharing of school policies. Leaders and staff celebrate pupils who attend school well. There are robust systems at both school and trust level to analyse patterns of attendance. Leaders use this information effectively to spot patterns and trends on an individual basis. They work closely with families and external agencies when attendance becomes a concern. Consequently, pupils' attendance is at least in line with national averages overtime.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. The atmosphere both in and outside the classroom is calm and purposeful. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently well. This starts in the early years where children respond well to the clear routines that are in place. They listen carefully and are eager to learn. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. Staff provide effective support to pupils who need help to manage their behaviour. Social times are calm and purposeful. Pupils of all ages enjoy the range of activities available to them, such as the popular dance stage. They are confident to challenge and report any discriminatory behaviour, knowing that staff will act quickly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have an informed view of the quality of the curriculum and the way in which teachers deliver it. The curriculum is well designed and sequenced. It makes clear the important knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils need to learn and when, from the early years to Year 6. The promotion of oracy and high-quality vocabulary is a clear feature of the curriculum design.

Teachers typically teach the curriculum well. In mathematics, for example, they recap upon what pupils already know, addressing any gaps in learning quickly. Teachers model new ideas clearly. They make effective use of learning resources such as number frames, to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same curriculum as their peers. In subjects such as Spanish, teachers design learning activities that skilfully develop pupils' language, pronunciation and vocabulary. However, in some other subjects, some learning activities do not enable pupils to deepen their understanding as well as they should. This hinders the progress that some pupils make across the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise the basic skills that pupils need in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff deliver the school's approach to phonics consistently. They present new sounds clearly and provide opportunities for pupils to practice and apply their knowledge in their writing.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and inclusive vision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They identify pupils' needs quickly, making effective use of their specialist knowledge and by working closely with families and a range of external professionals, such as occupational therapists and school nursing staff.

Leaders ensure that staff typically follow the school's inclusive approach. Staff benefit from a range of professional learning opportunities which develop their understanding of how to best meet pupils' needs. For example, strategies to support pupils with their understanding and management of their emotions are particularly effective. Typically, individual pupil plans are precise and regularly reviewed. This enables staff to make careful adaptations to the provision that pupils with SEND receive.

Leaders provide pupils who are known or previously known to children's social care with the support they need to thrive. They use the advice and guidance they receive from

professionals, such as the virtual school, to ensure that any gaps these pupils face to their achievement or wellbeing close quickly.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, they provide pupils with reading books to support ‘free reading Fridays’ or remove barriers to their access to extra-curricular clubs. Leaders check the impact of the pupil premium strategy with rigor, ensuring that it is having the greatest impact on pupils.

Leadership and governance **Expected standard**

With the support of the trust, leaders have successfully managed a period of staffing change. The headteacher, together with other leaders, make decisions that are always in the best interest of pupils. Leaders are reflective and open to new ideas. They have an accurate understanding of what the school does well, together with any areas for further development. They routinely check on key aspects of the school's work and use this effectively to bring about improvement. The improvement to pupil outcomes in the Year 1 phonic screening check is an example of this.

Trustees and members of the trust local committee share leaders’ vision for the school. They are knowledgeable and experienced. Trustees and local committee members know the school well and provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They fulfil their statutory duties, for example in relation to safeguarding, well.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the professional learning opportunities on offer to them which develops their practice and builds their confidence. Teachers who aspire to become future leaders appreciate the opportunities they have to undertake professional qualifications which in turn builds leadership capacity in the school. Staff feel valued and supported in their roles. They know that leaders understand the pressures they face and are considerate of their wellbeing.

The vast majority of parents and carers comment positively on the school’s welcoming and inclusive ethos, friendly and supportive staff and the pastoral support that pupils receive.

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

Pupils are proud to attend St John and St Francis Church School. They describe their school as a ‘colourful and welcoming’ place where everyone celebrates difference and gets along with one another. Pupils understand how the school values help them to be friendly, understanding of others and to persevere when they face challenges.

Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning and attend school regularly. By the end of year 6, pupils achieve well in national curriculum tests. Across the school, pupils build their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects which prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or an increasing number of pupils who speak English

as an additional language, receive the right support. This enables these pupils to take a full and active role in all the school has to offer.

Adults take time to get to know pupils for the individuals they are. Relationships are warm and respectful. Pupils understand and follow the school rules which helps them to be ready to learn, show respect to others and feel safe. They behave well, both in and outside the classroom. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils know that staff will deal with it swiftly.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Despite being in the early stages of their schooling, they show high levels of independence and curiosity. Children play extremely well with one another, taking turns and helping one another to solve problems.

Pupils benefit from the comprehensive range of opportunities available to them, such as choir and football club, trips to learn about the Vikings and residential visits. They wear their leadership blazers with pride. Pupils know how their roles as team captains, sports leaders and school councillors enable them to act as positive role models to others.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently design learning activities that more precisely match what pupils know, can do and understand.
- Leaders should continue to ensure that pupils develop and improve their writing across the curriculum, with a particular focus on transcription skills.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nikki Edwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beverley Hobbs.

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

This inspection took place from 6 October to 7 October 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, regional hub director, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the deputy chief executive officer, the chair of trustees and the chair of the trust local committee.

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 Bath and Wells. Its last section 48 inspection was January 2019.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. This includes changes to senior leadership. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2026.

Headteacher: James Webb

Lead inspector:
Ben Jordan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Wendy Hanrahan, Ofsted Inspector
Katharine Anstey, Ofsted Inspector
Gary Margerison, 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

421
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: 268

School capacity

436

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: 26.5%

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

4.75%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.05%
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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	72%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	74%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	81%	73%	Above

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	36%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	46%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	64%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	36%	59%	Below
2023/24 (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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average

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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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	36%	69%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	67%	-36 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	36%	78%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	79%	-17 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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
2025/26 (1 term)	4.2%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	9.9%	14.4%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	7.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	12.9%	14.6%	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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