

St John's C of E Academy

Address: Bowens Hill Road, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8DU

Unique reference number (URN): 145123

Inspection report: 19 May 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 ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the early years. This is fully realised. Leaders expertly review the curriculum each year to meet children's individual needs. As soon as children join the school, staff create a range of exciting opportunities which develop children's social skills. This helps children learn together effectively. Children learn a coherent and progressive curriculum. They learn in a vibrant and engaging space, where they thrive and achieve well. By the end of Reception, they are ready for Year 1.

Early reading, writing and mathematics are taught daily, with opportunities for children to practise what they have learned through play. For example, children build shelters, group numbers and paint camper vans for 'Percy the Park Keeper'. Early reading is a high priority. Children learn the sounds and letters that they need to become more confident in reading.

Leaders and staff have a deep understanding of how children develop. Staff use high-quality interactions to extend children's thinking. They model key language meticulously. As a result, children, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, quickly develop the early skills they need for future learning.

Relationships between staff and children are consistently warm and caring. This helps children to feel secure. Partnerships with parents and carers are especially positive, ensuring that families are fully engaged in supporting their children's education.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils' achievement across school and in national tests has improved over recent years, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. However, published outcomes do not reflect the quality of learning and the progress of current pupils. Leaders are quick to respond if outcomes do not meet the national average. For example, leaders quickly improved the curriculum and they adjusted the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Pupils achieve particularly well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils get off to a flying start in early years and leave Reception Year very well prepared for their learning in Year 1. Most pupils develop the basic skills that they need to succeed across the curriculum. Pupils' writing skills, particularly their handwriting, have improved throughout this year. This means pupils' written work is often of a high quality.

Pupils' work demonstrates how they build knowledge across all subjects as they progress through the school. Pupils talk confidently about their learning. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. Leaders provide effective support for pupils who struggle with this. Leaders know the school's attendance trends and this enables them to act quickly and tailor the support to meet pupils' needs. Leaders identify the barriers to attendance that some pupils face, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils or those facing challenging circumstances. Leaders use effective strategies that have improved attendance over time. As a result, attendance for all pupils, especially those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, is above the national average.

Leaders and staff have established a calm, orderly and supportive environment where pupils learn successfully. Staff typically apply behaviour policies consistently. Pupils generally have positive attitudes in lessons and take part in their learning enthusiastically. They usually follow the school rules and values. Pupils are typically kind and polite to one another. At social times, pupils play well together. However, there are times when pupils demonstrate lower levels of self-discipline. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and as a result pupils feel safe. Leaders make appropriate use of suspensions and temporary, part-time timetables when needed.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum. It is well sequenced to build pupils' knowledge over time. Staff plan learning in response to pupils' changing needs. They generally deliver the curriculum effectively, adjusting their approaches where needed to cater for disadvantaged pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy the curriculum. Older pupils speak passionately about a recent study of complex ecosystems and climates.

The curriculum prioritises early reading, writing and mathematical knowledge. Improved pencil grip, letter formation and handwriting are having a significant impact on pupils' work. Pupils love reading and look forward to taking books home from the well-resourced library.

Teaching typically meets leaders' aspirations and supports pupils in developing their understanding of topics. Strategic questioning in lessons helps teachers check how well pupils have learned new knowledge. The school's 'lock it in' approach helps pupils remember challenging content and encourages independence. Staff are confident in explaining and modelling concepts, and they have secure subject knowledge. However, some inconsistencies remain in how effectively teachers deliver the curriculum. Some tasks do not build on previous learning and do not enable pupils to make sufficient progress from their starting points. As a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could in some lessons.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

St John's is an inclusive school. Leaders and staff know pupils' individual needs well and use this knowledge to provide timely, well targeted support. This helps pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access learning successfully. School leaders work closely with families to identify when

pupils may need extra support. Leaders, with support from the trust, seek advice from a range of professionals and specialist services. Leaders effectively implement this advice and routinely review the impact of support.

In the classroom, staff use their training to implement the school's inclusive approach. They check pupils' understanding regularly to identify any misunderstandings. Teachers adapt learning, so pupils can regularly revisit and strengthen key knowledge. For example, staff offer sentence starters, vocabulary sheets, and handwriting guides to help pupils succeed. Pupils with SEND gain secure skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps them make steady progress and, in some cases, close the gaps with their peers.

Leaders use additional funding carefully to support disadvantaged pupils. They provide a range of pastoral support and time for pupils to talk about their wellbeing. Leaders work effectively with alternative provision when needed. This ensures pupils receive the right support outside the classroom.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school community well. They show the utmost determination to provide the highest quality of education and care for pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Leaders prioritise developments that will have the greatest impact on pupils' outcomes. They regularly evaluate the impact of their actions and make swift adjustments when necessary.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and bring a broad range of skills to their roles. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement. Governors provide robust challenge and timely support to leaders. They are wholeheartedly committed to sustained improvement. Governors carefully check that leaders' actions are having the intended impact. Trustees are equally vigilant. They check that the school's funding has a positive impact on pupils. This includes additional funding to support pupils who experience challenging circumstances in their lives.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional learning. This develops their expertise and enables them to deliver the curriculum and assess pupils' learning effectively. Staff are also grateful for the recent 'mental health champion' training which means they are confident when supporting pupils. School and trust leaders consider staff's workload and wellbeing when decisions are made. Staff feel well supported.

Parents and carers praise the support that the school gives to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. They are positive and recognise the opportunities their children have access to at St John's. Parents value the warm relationships that staff build with them and their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a well-considered and age-appropriate personal, social and health education curriculum. They continue to refine it so that the content reflects both the school's context and pupils' specific needs. For example, the school has included a strong focus on mental health. As a result, pupils know how to maintain their mental health and

wellbeing. Pupils recently learned about perseverance in assembly by focusing on a London marathon runner. They recognised how the runner showed resilience in tough situations.

Leaders provide carefully organised events for pupils, parents and carers, delivered by external professionals. A recent session on online safety, delivered by the police, was enjoyed by all pupils and some families. As a result, pupils understand how to stay safe online. Staff teach relationships and health education thoughtfully, ensuring pupils understand healthy relationships. Generally, pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values. They show respect for one another and use democratic processes when voting for the school council each year.

Leaders have carefully considered the trips and activities available to pupils. Residential give pupils the opportunity to experience canoeing and climbing. Pupils relish the various leadership roles on offer. They value being house captains and eco-councillors. Pupils participate in clubs and activities in areas such as sports, arts and games. Teachers design these to support pupils' talents and interests. Some older pupils run their own lunchtime clubs, demonstrating their independence and collaboration skills. Leaders carefully track participation to ensure that every pupil is supported in accessing the full range of opportunities. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities play an active role in school life.

Pupils learn to respect different cultures, faiths and backgrounds, and they demonstrate an astute understanding of equality. However, pupils have limited knowledge of the range of cultures and religions found in Britain. As a result, they do not yet have a secure understanding of what life is like beyond Gloucestershire.

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

St John's is a calm school where staff know the children and families well. Staff greet pupils cheerfully as pupils enter the school. Interactions between pupils and staff create a sense of family and pupils develop a sense of belonging. Clear routines and trusting relationships embody leaders' expectations. Pupils know staff will listen to any worries they may have. Pupils aspire to do well and enjoy coming to school.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons. During playtimes they play ball games or take it in turns to enjoy the rope swing. Pupils feel safe at school because bullying and unkind behaviour are rare. They attend well and have a positive view of school.

Pupils build secure knowledge across subjects which prepares them well for their next steps. Published outcomes do not reflect the standards that current pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with any barriers to learning make progress from their starting points. This happens because leaders are quick to spot and tackle any barriers to learning. Teachers provide extra help for pupils who have gaps in their learning.

Pupils learn about perseverance, truth, forgiveness, respect and aspiration. These values help pupils to thrive, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils explain how these values help them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities. Pupils enjoy crochet club and the gardening club is well attended. Pupils value the range of roles of responsibilities, including being play leaders and helping to litter pick during lunchtime. Older pupils act as positive role models by guiding and inspiring the younger children. For example, they remind younger pupils about behaviour expectations in the corridor. Older pupils also highlight those pupils who demonstrate the school values during collective worship.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well so that pupils achieve highly.
 - Leaders should continue to embed high expectations of behaviour so that more pupils develop their self-discipline.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in Britain.
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About this inspection

The school is part of The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust, which means that other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Canon Rachel Howie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Canon Craig Huxley-Jones.

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 school leaders, trust leaders and the diocese. The lead inspector also met with a trustee.

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 Gloucestershire. Its last section 48 inspection was in July 2024.

The school currently uses one registered alternative provision

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Emma Mignaud

Lead inspector:

Thomas Brewer, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Fox, Ofsted Inspector

Lizzy Meadows, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

154

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: 272

School capacity

210

Below 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)

37.01%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

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

3.90%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

30.52%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	54%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42%	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	64%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	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	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	58%	73%	Below

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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	38%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25%	44%	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	44%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	25%	60%	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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	38%	58%	Below
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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	82%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	41%	68%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	67%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	25%	66%	-41 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	44%	80%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	25%	78%	-53 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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	73%	78%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	78%	-40 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	59%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	82%	81%	1 pp
2023/24 (final)	38%	79%	-42 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	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)	7.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	14.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	20.4%	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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