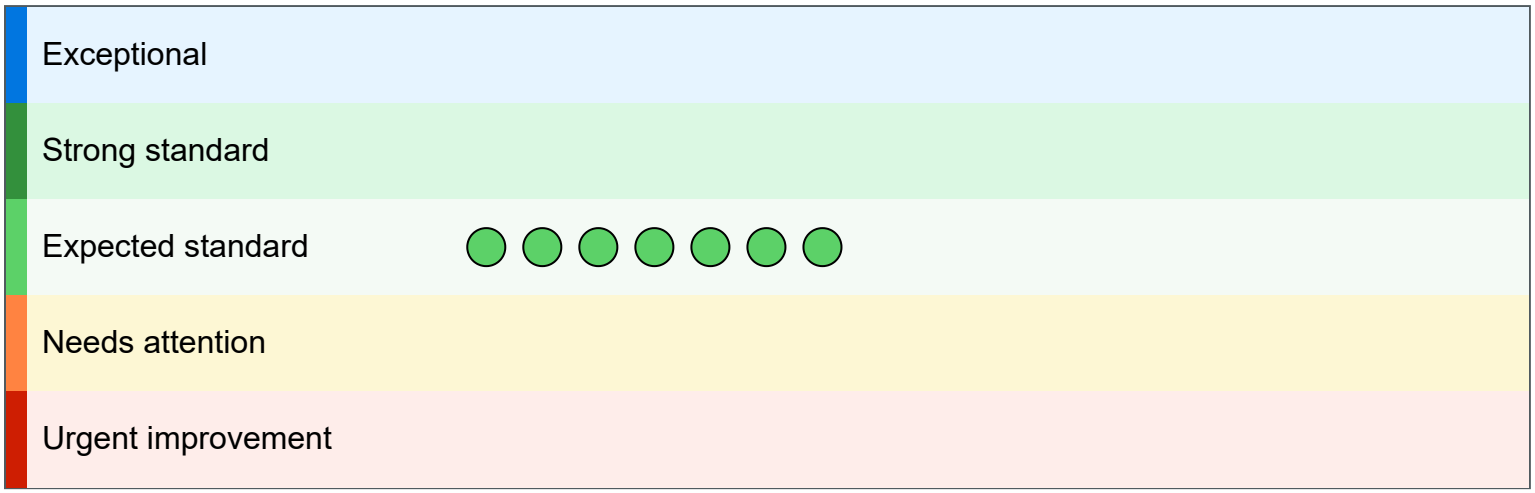
St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Address: Elsworthy Road, Primrose Hill, London, NW3 3DS

Unique reference number (URN): 100046

Inspection report: 3 February 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils typically achieve well at this school. Most pupils make sustained progress through the curriculum from their respective starting points. They develop the handwriting, spelling, reading and mathematical knowledge that they need at each stage of their education. In other subjects, pupils show suitably detailed knowledge of the content they have been taught. This means that pupils are well prepared for future learning. At times, however, standards of pupils' work are not as high in some subjects in the wider curriculum as they are in others.

Attainment in national tests shows that pupils, including for all prior attainment groups, achieve close to or above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are a significant strength. Disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently highly and typically above disadvantaged pupils nationally at key stage 2. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening test and Year 4 multiplication times tables check are consistently close to average.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Attendance is an ongoing priority for leaders. Overall attendance has improved in the last 2 years and is close to the national average. Leaders analyse attendance information carefully to pick up any concerns. They work with parents and carers closely to identify reasons for poor attendance. Sometimes these are for families who take children on holiday during term time, despite the use of penalty fines. In other cases, leaders find out about individual barriers and give bespoke support. Staff do what is needed to ensure that pupils are settled at school and want to attend. This has resulted in significant improvement for some pupils.

Leaders have established a culture where positive behaviour is both the expectation and the norm. Classrooms are calm and pupils learn without disruption. Typically, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are motivated to be 'shining stars' by a range of rewards. Leaders ensure that all staff are trained to manage the rare incidents of poor behaviour. Staff show a supportive and understanding approach to pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. For example, they help pupils to manage their emotions and allow space for pupils who can become overwhelmed in the classroom or playground. Bullying does not happen often. If it happens, it is dealt with promptly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a well-structured curriculum that matches the breadth and scope of the national curriculum. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is at the core of the curriculum. Teaching in these areas helps pupils to develop their skills and knowledge securely, building in complexity as they progress through the curriculum. This is particularly notable in mathematics. Leaders have prioritised further improvements in pupils' writing skills, with a focus on pupils' handwriting and their ability to use increasingly sophisticated vocabulary. The positive impact of this can be seen, especially in Reception and key stage 1. Early reading is taught well, and weaker readers receive effective support to help them to

catch up quickly. Pupils are typically keen readers and like selecting books from the recently reorganised library.

Teachers are generally confident in their subject knowledge and use a variety of effective teaching strategies to help pupils learn and remember important knowledge. They check pupils' understanding routinely and make changes to their teaching as necessary. Adaptations to learning are generally well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders recognise that the curriculum and teaching in some subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, are better developed than a few subjects in the wider curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard

Staff in early years provide high-quality care and build trusting relationships with children. Leaders work effectively from the outset to identify and reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Close work with families, well-planned transition arrangements and timely involvement from external specialists ensure that children's starting points and next steps are accurately identified and met. Typically, staff use their expertise to secure progress across all learning areas. They ensure that children grow in confidence, develop independence and form positive relationships with others. This means that children are well prepared for future learning.

Communication and language underpin all aspects of the provision. Staff model vocabulary skilfully and promote the use of full sentences in conversation, particularly supporting children who need the most help. Learning across all areas is deliberately and carefully planned. Phonics teaching helps children steadily build the skills they need to become confident early readers. Staff foster a love of reading throughout the day, from books being available at the school gate through to afternoon story time. Transitions into Year 1 are well managed. Together, staff plan activities to support children to keep up and catch up as needed. Staff foster positive parental engagement through workshops and home-learning activities. Parents and carers speak very highly of their children's experiences.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have established effective approaches to identifying and assessing pupils' needs at an early stage. They work closely with families and use a range of information to identify and understand the individual needs of pupils when they join the school. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders use their in-depth knowledge of pupils and involve other professionals as needed to decide on appropriate support. They regularly review pupils' targets to ensure that these reflect pupils' changing needs and have the required impact.

Teachers receive the right information to plan learning effectively with pupils' needs in mind. At times, strategies to support pupils in the wider curriculum are not adjusted to fully align with pupils' needs. Staff are well trained and, where necessary, further training is given to help with specific support. For example, specific training has enhanced staff's understanding of why pupils may find it hard to manage their behaviour and emotions.

Additional funding is suitably allocated and reviewed to support the growing number of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils with barriers to their learning and wellbeing. This has

a very positive impact on these pupils' academic attainment and progress, as well as ensuring that all pupils have access to the rich opportunities on offer here.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have established a close-knit staff team where everybody works together to give pupils a high-quality education. Leaders know their school well. This enables them to recognise its strengths and have a clear rationale for identified priority areas. Leaders are reflective and receptive to external evaluations of the school to help them improve it further. Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning and wellbeing faced by some pupils. They take effective action to remove barriers, and decisions made are firmly in pupils' best interests.

Governors show commitment to their roles and play an active role in shaping the school's vision. They contribute effectively to school improvement through, for example, review days, subject-link visits and regular discussions with school leaders. Governors also use a range of information effectively, including pupils' attainment and progress information, to guide their decisions, allocate resources appropriately and fulfil their statutory duties.

Leaders provide a range of ongoing professional learning to ensure that staff are well equipped to teach the curriculum. Staff value the opportunities they are given to develop their practice, including in leadership roles. Recent changes in leadership have been managed well, and staff have been supported throughout this transition.

Staff are very appreciative of leaders' efforts to manage their workload and make this school a happy place to work. Staff are immensely proud of their school. Parents and carers speak very positively about how leaders work in partnership with them to ensure that their children are happy and safe.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Through a carefully planned programme, pupils have a wide range of opportunities that contribute positively to their wider development, wellbeing and enjoyment of school. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from the same opportunities. This includes providing funding where needed for pupils who are disadvantaged to attend residential trips. Leaders also actively encourage disadvantaged pupils to participate in activities that they may not otherwise have access to, such as extra-curricular clubs in chess and ukulele. The school provides chances for pupils to show off their talents through music festivals, football tournaments and dance competitions, for example. Pupils enjoy the wide-ranging educational trips, which include visits to art galleries, Shakespeare workshops and the zoo.

Pupils develop their leadership and teamwork skills through taking on various responsibilities, including school council roles, house captains and fundraising for the sister school in Malawi. Staff support pupils in their understanding of life in modern Britain, which helps pupils to be aware of concepts such as democracy and equality. Pupils show considerable knowledge of religion and different faiths. They draw on this knowledge to explore and discuss ideas. For example, in class debates, pupils show an awareness of how people's beliefs shape points of view. Activities such as 'International Day' give pupils meaningful experiences of different cultures, from learning the haka to exploring Irish sports.

The school encourages pupils to take an active role in community events. At the school's Christmas fair, for example, pupils fundraise through selling items they have made in design and technology.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is carefully planned and incorporates relationships education. In general, this is well taught and pupils show appropriate knowledge of their learning in PSHE. They have a clear understanding of aspects such as online safety, healthy relationships and mental wellbeing. Occasionally, pupils have misconceptions and lack detailed knowledge about some of the content taught.

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

This is a warm, nurturing and community-centred school where pupils' wellbeing is of utmost importance. Staff ensure that pupils are happy, safe and able to enjoy and succeed in their learning, regardless of their background or barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. As a result, pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils, achieve well here and make positive progress from their starting points.

Many pupils join the school at different points in the year. Staff ensure that new pupils and their families are welcomed so that they settle into the school community quickly and easily. Pupils are friendly and kind to each other. Bullying is rare, and pupils trust staff to deal with any friendship issues. Older pupils support younger ones, such as helping them to join in playground games.

Pupils attend well. Leaders have established rules and routines around the school that pupils understand. Pupils know that they are expected to show kindness and respect, act safely and try their best. They live up to staff's high expectations, and the school is a harmonious place for pupils of all ages to learn and have fun.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand what it means to live in modern Britain. Pupils learn why tolerance and mutual respect matter. They are taught about equality and the characteristics, such as gender and race, that are protected by law. Pupils make links between these ideas and some of the texts that they read in class.

Staff make creative use of the school facilities. The early years provision is full of purposeful and well-planned learning activities that children engage with enthusiastically. The recently developed school garden, for example, is a well-used space to spark pupils’ imagination and support them in their learning. Pupils grow and tend to herbs, flowers and vegetables in their class planters and learn about recycling in the specially designed greenhouse.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum and teaching are highly effective in all areas so that pupils consistently achieve high standards.

- Leaders should continue to refine adaptations to learning so that these are skilfully adjusted as needed, particularly in the wider curriculum.
- Leaders should continue their work with families to secure consistently high attendance for pupils.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Lucinda Ahrens.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other school leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing board.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character and is in the Diocese of London. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school manages a breakfast club.

Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured. Two new assistant headteachers took up post in September 2025.

Headteacher: Mr Clive Hale

Lead inspector:
Jude Wilson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Nick Hitchen, His Majesty's Inspector
Sara Morgan, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

187
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)

40.64%
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

1.07%
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

13.90%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	80%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	74%	60%	Above

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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	88%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	71%	Above

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	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

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	76%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	71%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	44%	Above

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	86%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

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	78%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	81%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	76%	68%	8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	69%	31 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	67%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	66%	-8 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	86%	80%	7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	80%	6 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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	78%	78%	1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	78%	22 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	78%	1 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	77%	-19 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	81%	80%	1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	79%	-1 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	79%	-13 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 (2 term)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	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 (2 term)	15.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	24.4%	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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