

Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy

URN: 143987 | Inspected: 06 January 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.

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils generally achieve well, including disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes in national tests are typically in line with national averages. In 2025, results were particularly strong, with more pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than nationally. Leaders respond swiftly to any dips in performance. For example, after weaker results in the Year 4 multiplication tables check, leaders adapted the school's approach to teaching multiplication. This led to a marked improvement the following year. Pupils' work across the wider curriculum shows they make progress, although recall in some subjects is less secure than in others. Teaching and the way it is adapted ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress from their starting points. From the early years, handwriting is taught explicitly. However, while children form letters correctly during teacher-led sessions, this is not always evident in their independent writing. Where such errors are not corrected, children continue to make mistakes in their handwriting.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a broad curriculum that begins in the early years and builds progressively through the school. There is clarity about what should be taught and when. Leaders check the quality of the curriculum through a range of activities, including trust-led quality assurance visits. Where improvements are needed, leaders act quickly, providing tailored support for staff which draws on external expertise. For example, this approach has led to greater consistency in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and deliver key concepts clearly. They regularly check what pupils know and can do, using well-embedded strategies to share ideas and reinforce learning. Leaders ensure that younger pupils and older pupils who have fallen behind develop the fundamental knowledge they need to progress to more-complex ideas. For example, staff teach phonics with accuracy and confidence. However, expectations for handwriting are not applied consistently across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not secure the handwriting fluency they need, particularly when writing independently. Leaders and staff know pupils' needs well. Staff make appropriate adaptations to teaching so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can follow the curriculum successfully. This means pupils participate fully in lessons.

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Early years

Expected standard

Staff prioritise language development in the early years and this helps children to achieve well. Adults model rich vocabulary and sentence structures through high-quality interactions. Staff make sure that children with gaps in their phonics knowledge receive timely support. The early years curriculum promotes a love of reading. A well-stocked book corner engages all groups of children. Children enjoy listening to stories that extend their understanding of words. Provision for independent learning in the early years environment builds on adult-led sessions, supporting curiosity. Staff make the most of learning opportunities. For example, very cold weather leads to great excitement as children carefully explore frozen puddles and practice words such as 'freezing' and 'melting'. They then take part in writing activities linked to ice and snow. However, children's independent writing does not always reflect the accurate letter formation that is taught during adult-led sessions. Children develop secure personal, social and emotional skills. They learn routines, manage transitions and understand how to make healthy choices. Children learn strategies to support their emotions and confidently express their feelings. Staff work closely with parents, especially where additional needs emerge. Where this is the case, adaptations are made to support individual children. Leaders ensure that links with Year 1 help children to be well prepared for their

next steps

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have systems that identify and support pupils' needs well. Overall, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), support is tailored to their individual circumstances. Other vulnerable groups, such as those known to children's social care and pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, are identified and monitored closely. Leaders check how well support and interventions are working. This helps them to remove barriers so that pupils can take part fully in school life. Leaders recognise that the assessment of the needs of some pupils with SEND should be more precise. They are therefore refining how they review support for such pupils so that needs are identified early and progress checked effectively.

Staff receive high-quality training, including from external specialists. This means staff are well prepared to meet pupils' needs in lessons. Leaders also work with other professionals, such as specialist teachers and the virtual school, to make sure pupils get the right support. Leaders ensure pupil premium funding is used effectively to support eligible pupils. This helps them to be included and take part in all aspects of the curriculum. The school uses alternative provision appropriately and takes responsibility for the education and welfare of pupils who attend these settings.

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Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Pupils' welfare and outcomes are at the centre of decision-making. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They focus on the right priorities to secure improvement. The trust is a robust partner in school improvement. It maintains oversight of the school's work and provides effective support for improvement. Leaders use external assurance to identify priorities and monitor their progress towards achieving these. Trustees understand their responsibilities. They ensure that leaders have the capacity and expertise to drive improvement. Recent changes to governance have strengthened accountability and clarified roles. This ensures that trustees and local governors fulfil their statutory duties and provide purposeful challenge. Professional development for staff is closely aligned to the school improvement plan. Leaders monitor the impact of the strategies used carefully which has improved consistency in the quality of teaching. Staff say that training is relevant and tailored to their needs. Staff are highly positive about leaders' approach to managing staff wellbeing and workload. Staff feel that leaders are approachable, listen to them and take practical steps to reduce workload where possible. Most parents and carers are positive about the school and value the support their children receive. However, some express concerns about recent changes to communication. They say these have reduced their ability to stay fully informed and engaged in their children's learning.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school promotes pupils' personal development and wellbeing well. Leaders remove barriers to ensure that all groups of pupils participate fully in this aspect of the school's work. There is a coherent approach to personal, social and health education. Pupils also benefit from a range of wider opportunities that build character, confidence and cooperation. This helps them learn to respect others and value differences. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at their school. They understand that everyone should be treated fairly and equally. Pupils speak confidently about how to stay safe when online. They also understand the need to follow particular rules around the school and in the community to keep themselves and others safe. They learn about forming positive friendships. They know how to solve any problems that arise with their friends but also recognise when they might need more help from an adult. They understand different forms of bullying. Pupils have a particularly positive understanding of the school's own values. They clearly demonstrate these in their behaviour. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and democracy. However, they are not always as confident with these concepts as they are with their own school values. In the early years, children begin to learn strategies to support their own emotions. This means that, throughout the school, pupils use well-embedded language to reflect on how they are feeling and how they ask for support. They are confident that staff will respond and give them the help they need. Educational visits enrich the curriculum for all year groups. Older pupils particularly enjoy residential trips. However, fewer extra-curricular clubs are currently available than was the case in the past.

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

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Pupils are proud to be members of this school and describe it as a place where they feel part of a family. They say that everyone knows each other and that they can talk to any adult if they need help. Friendships matter to pupils, and they enjoy making friends across different classes. Pupils feel safe because they are listened to and supported. They are confident that staff help them to be the best versions of themselves. Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. They understand the importance of attending school regularly and on time because this means they do not miss learning. Pupils feel well known. In class, staff know what works well for pupils and provide this so that barriers to learning are reduced. Behaviour is very positive. Pupils are polite, caring and kind. They understand the school's values, such as compassion and respect, and show these in their interactions with others. Children in the early years wait patiently for their turn and older pupils quickly refocus after lively discussions about their ideas in mathematics lessons, for example. Pupils say that any issues that do happen are resolved quickly and fairly. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, such as helping younger children and setting up playground zones. They are also proud to contribute to their community through charity events, litter picking and planting flowers. They look forward to activities like the 'race across Leybourne' and enjoy when the community joins them in school, such as for the fireworks display.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and accurately so that support can be targeted effectively.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum enables younger pupils, including children in the early years, to develop secure handwriting skills that support their writing across the curriculum.
- Leaders should strengthen communication with parents and carers so they are well informed about their children's education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils' attendance is positive and is consistently in line with what is typical nationally. Very few pupils miss school regularly. Leaders carefully analyse attendance data for individual pupils and for different groups. They use what they learn from this to ensure that pupils whose attendance is a concern receive targeted support. Leaders work closely with families to overcome barriers. Leaders' actions have led to improved attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They follow the clear standards which leaders set for behaviour. Older pupils take pride in supporting their younger peers, especially during social times. This contributes to the calm and welcoming environment evident across the school. In classrooms, there is little disruption to learning. If required, staff swiftly reinforce expectations and pupils respond well to this. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe and deal effectively with any issues. Pupils who need extra support with managing their behaviour or emotions receive this. Leaders monitor all individual behaviour issues closely. They are developing their strategic oversight so that they can identify and act upon any trends across the school.

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For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/leybourne-st-peter-and-st-paul-church-of-england-primary-academy-west-malling>