

# Shaftesbury Primary School

URN: 145627 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

## 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 Exceptional

Across all year groups, pupils develop deep foundational knowledge. Published data shows that pupils' progress and attainment in national tests and assessments are consistently significantly above the national averages. Disadvantaged pupils achieve especially well. Their performance in national tests consistently exceeds that of their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. The school addresses any gaps in foundational knowledge swiftly. This highly effective work is well embedded, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who join partway through their education. This transforms the achievement of these pupils. It means that they, along with their classmates, are exceptionally well prepared for future learning. Pupils also excel in other curriculum areas. The fluency, depth and confidence with which they recall knowledge is impressive, as is their consistently high-quality work across subjects. Pupils' strong foundational knowledge underpins these high standards, enabling them to access subject content confidently and write and speak about ideas accurately.

## Curriculum and teaching Exceptional

Curriculum and teaching enable pupils to accomplish remarkable things. Whether they are learning Mandarin, building fluency in reading, writing and mathematics, or practising their balance in physical education, pupils experience an exceptionally high-quality curriculum and teaching. In each subject and phase, leaders ensure that expectations for what pupils should know and by when are highly ambitious and well defined. Setting pupils up for successful learning, both now and in the future, forms the basis for all of leaders' decisions. Teaching focuses sharply on making sure that every pupil builds deep foundational knowledge. This begins the moment pupils join the school, whether this is in the early years or later on in their education. Staff's excellent subject knowledge and teaching expertise mean that they deliver subject content with clarity, anticipating what pupils need to know so that they understand new concepts. Using assessment strategies purposefully, staff also adeptly provide activities that enable pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to revisit and deliberately practise knowledge until they grasp it securely and apply it in different contexts. Any difficulties that pupils face in understanding new concepts are tackled immediately. Excellence is sustained over time because leaders leave nothing to chance with pupils' learning. This is clear in their reflective and astute oversight of every element of curriculum and teaching. Working closely with teachers, the trust and pupils, leaders have an in-depth picture of how successfully pupils are learning in each subject, including pupils who are disadvantaged. They act decisively to make judicious adjustments to curriculum and teaching, so that pupils' learning across the

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curriculum consistently flourishes.

## Early years Exceptional

The early years has an extraordinarily positive impact on children's lives. Leaders' and staff's work to promote children's readiness for future learning is first rate. Across the curriculum, children's achievement is exceptionally high, including in foundational knowledge. Excellent provision for early reading and writing, including phonics, gives children the knowledge that they need to read and write with accuracy. Reception-age children confidently write simple sentences about familiar stories. They reread what they have written with pride. Through positive relationships with parents and carers, the school is quick to build a full picture of what children know and can do. Staff waste no time in supporting children who need more help to secure foundational knowledge, including in reading. This includes, for instance, targeted teaching for the many children who join with low starting points in communication and language. Through staff's expert input, these children catch up rapidly. Staff continually return to and enrich language during children's learning and play. They anticipate and provide exactly what children need next to nurture and embed their understanding. For example, as children make pretend food in the mud kitchen, staff recap words children could use to describe different-size cups. Children exude excitement and confidence as they master new knowledge such as holding a pencil with the correct grip. They also delight in rereading their favourite stories, readily using story language they hear in their play and learning. Strong standard

## Inclusion

Strong standard

Inclusive practices reflect leaders' high aspirations for all, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's approaches to identifying pupils' needs are purposeful and well established. Leaders know each pupil's needs and barriers extremely well. They adeptly pinpoint the most effective strategies to reduce and remove barriers to pupils' success. Together with the trust, leaders make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills to use and adapt these strategies effectively in the classroom. For example, staff skilfully provide any additional resources or explanations that pupils with SEND need to understand and practise what is being taught. More recently, the school's work has been especially successful in supporting the increasing number of pupils with complex speech, language and communication needs. These pupils benefit from high-quality provision for their learning and development. This provision is both ambitious and tailored to pupils' specific needs. Staff expertly help these pupils to feel reassured, follow learning routines and build understanding step by step. Leaders' oversight of how well pupils are supported, including through the pupil premium funding, is rigorous. It is sharply focused on making sure that pupils get what they need at exactly the right moment, both academically and pastorally.

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## Leadership and governance

### Strong standard

Leaders know their school and its community inside out. Their understanding of the school's challenges and context is insightful and rigorous. They know what is working well and continually look for ways to enhance and innovate practice so that the school's work makes the greatest possible difference to pupils' outcomes, especially with curriculum and teaching and in early years. The trust's support and challenge are well considered and proportionate. This helps leaders to evaluate and hone improvement work further, as well as make sure that all statutory duties are fulfilled. Together, the trust and school leaders put pupils' needs front and centre of every decision. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders work tenaciously and with moral purpose to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in the community. This is clear not only in the way they systematically identify and remove anything that may stand in the way of pupils achieving highly, but also in the school's sensitive care and support for families. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all the school does to help their children excel and thrive. Staff are inspired by leaders' vision and the way they lead this community. Staff at all levels benefit from high-quality professional learning programmes which foster their teaching expertise. They value how the school helps them to give pupils the very best start to their education, and in turn, transform pupils' life chances. Staff also appreciate the many ways that leaders take care of well-being, including a dedicated staff well-being team. They respect how leaders only expect them to do things that will make a tangible difference to the quality of pupils' learning and well-being.

Personal development and well-being Strong standard Pupils benefit from a carefully considered and aspirational programme to support their wider development. This includes a broad and well-taught approach to their personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education and health education. Key principles such as fundamental British values, discrimination and racism are taught and revisited sensitively and in an age-appropriate manner. For example, pupils know why discrimination is wrong and that it has legal consequences. They understand and discuss complex moral and social issues responsibly. They also learn to appreciate and value diversity and difference, showing compassion for the experiences of others. This includes an array of rich opportunities for pupils to learn about and celebrate different cultures and faiths. Pupils know how what they are taught helps them to be considerate and respectful of others' beliefs and perspectives, both now and when they become adults. Pupils are also taught ways to look after their well-being, including when they go online. They know, for example, not to 'bottle up' their worries as this can affect their mental health. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a rich wider curriculum, including clubs, visitors to school and well-considered educational visits. Leaders ensure that these experiences help pupils to grow in confidence and expand their understanding of the wider world. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoy learning how to make Greek food with professional chefs. They also relish taking part in a professional theatre production and a residential trip, saying that experiences such as caving and big swings help them to 'face their fears'. Pupils take pride in helping others, including projects which support their local community. Roles as sports leaders and junior leadership team members help pupils to learn and apply important skills such as ways that disagreements can be managed or how to support someone who is having difficulties.

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

This is a joyful and inspiring school, where pupils' achievement soars to new heights. Leaders live up to their aim of giving all pupils 'a brighter future'. Throughout the day, pupils brim with a thirst for learning more. They relish mastering new knowledge and building their understanding of the world around them, including through the range of educational outings. Staff, pupils and families are rightly proud to be part of this remarkable school. Every aspect of the curriculum and teaching helps pupils to blossom. This includes the many pupils who join the school midway through their education. The highest academic standards are expected of everyone. Whatever their needs, leaders expertly ensure that pupils receive the right support for the right things at precisely the right moment. This means that all pupils overcome obstacles to success. They build detailed knowledge in all subjects and are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school. The attainment of Year 6 pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, is consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Early years is abuzz with children's delight in discovering and understanding something new. Staff are finely tuned into what children need and when this should happen. They are skilled in building foundational knowledge, including children's use of new words. For example, Nursery-age children have immense fun using the words they learn to describe size, shape and pattern. They use words such as 'small', 'big' and 'bigger' to sort objects such as teddy bears into different groups. By the time they start Year 1, almost all children are reading and writing with accuracy and fluency. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They listen attentively in class, become absorbed in their studies and contribute ideas in a thoughtful manner. At playtimes, everyone gets along because pupils value being respectful and caring towards others. They know that staff will not accept any unkindness or bullying. Staff are alert to potential issues with pupils' well-being and act quickly to resolve issues. Pupils are kept safe.

## Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should maintain and build upon the school's highly effective work to promote high rates of attendance, including intervening swiftly to support and challenge parents and carers with children whose attendance needs to improve.

## Attendance and behaviour

### Strong standard

Many pupils' individual circumstances mean that they often face complex or significant barriers to attending school regularly. Some pupils join Shaftesbury partway through their education without having established good attendance habits. These factors mean that published information on attendance rates, which currently sit below the national average, does not truly reflect the school's highly effective work to ensure that every pupil attends school each day. Using their detailed knowledge of each family's circumstances, leaders make sure that pupils get the help needed for regular attendance to become the norm. This help is continually refined so that it remains targeted to pupils' individual needs. Leaders do not shy away from having challenging conversations with parents and carers if attendance does not improve. When appropriate, this challenge is sensitively balanced with care and guidance for families experiencing difficult circumstances. Pupils also know and understand why

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regular attendance is so important for their learning and well-being. They like how excellent attendance is celebrated in assemblies and through rewards such as extra playtime. As a result of this effective work, there is compelling evidence that attendance rates are improving quickly for all groups and that persistent absence from school is reducing swiftly over time. Pupils follow the school's high expectations for behaviour without hesitation. They beam with pride in talking about how they live out the school's '5cs', which include courtesy, consideration and cooperation. For example, pupils like to demonstrate consideration by saying nice things to each other and their teachers 'to cheer them up'. Pupils' consistently excellent attitudes, including the joy and satisfaction that they take in their learning, make the school a happy and calm place in which to learn. Staff know how to promote positive behaviour. Any issues, including friendship difficulties or bullying, are rare and managed well.

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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/shaftesbury-primary-school-london>