

St James CofE Primary School

Address: Wolverley Crescent, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 1BG

Unique reference number (URN): 131673

Inspection report: 12 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly inclusive school culture. They make every effort to ensure that all pupils achieve and thrive. Staff get to know pupils quickly when they start school, or before where possible. This enables them to accurately identify all pupils' individual needs and any barriers that they may face.

Highly effective staff training and regular checks on pupils' learning mean that teachers can make careful adaptations to teaching and the learning environment. This enables all pupils to access the full curriculum. Leaders work closely with external specialists to ensure that pupils receive timely and effective support. As a result, pupils' barriers to learning and wellbeing are addressed swiftly.

Pupils in the hub are supported skilfully to learn. Leaders ensure that pupils follow a carefully adapted curriculum. The recently developed 'stepping stones' provision enables these pupils to successfully transition back into mainstream classes when they are ready.

Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and has a positive impact on personal and academic outcomes. Strong partnerships between parents and staff enable pupils to receive appropriate support and successfully overcome barriers.

Children known (or previously known) to children's social care are supported very well. Leaders work with external agencies, including the virtual school, to ensure that these pupils belong, flourish and learn.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders have astutely adapted the curriculum to make sure it prepares pupils well for the future. They prioritise safety and wellbeing. Leaders assess every pupil's wellbeing to make sure they understand any potential barriers. They provide bespoke support to help pupils overcome these obstacles. Staff track individuals and groups closely so that adjustments can be made quickly if needed. As a result, pupils thrive and make good progress. They enjoy coming to school and understand why education is important.

Pupils gain essential information to prepare them for the future. They learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships, and how to stay safe online and in their local community. Pupils are taught about the value of money, how to use it wisely and the risks it can bring. They have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values from an early age. They learn about a range of faiths and visit different places of worship. Pupils thoughtfully reflect on their own spiritual experiences and enjoy activities in the local church. Pupils can speak in depth about their learning and how it helps them in life.

Leaders ensure that pastoral support is always available. The wellbeing hub meets the needs of all pupils, many of whom have complex circumstances. Pupils know there is someone there to help them when needed. Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs that develop their skills and talents. They encourage all pupils to join in,

including those who may be reluctant, setting every pupil up for success. Pupils enjoy a range of carefully considered visits and themed days to broaden their experiences. They appreciate the leadership roles they hold, for example on the school council or as librarians. Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Despite low starting points, pupils at the school achieve broadly in line with national averages in mathematics and writing. Although reading outcomes in 2025 were below average, a high number of pupils joined the school mid year, and, although they made progress, they didn't catch up with their peers. Work in pupils' books shows that achievement is improving over time. This means that most pupils acquire the essential knowledge needed for the next stage of their education.

Leaders ensure that most pupils secure early foundations in reading and mathematics. This supports them to access the wider curriculum with increasing confidence as they move through the school. Pupils who need additional help to learn to read typically receive effective support. As a result, most of them catch up with their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally achieve well from their starting points. Staff provide support that helps them to develop the knowledge and skills they need. On the whole, pupils are well prepared for their next phase of learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with what is typical nationally. Leaders have recently renewed their approach to managing attendance, and this is already having a positive impact. They rigorously check reasons for absence and act quickly to provide support. This includes work with external agencies where appropriate. Leaders do much to support families and improve attendance. As a result, the rate at which pupils are persistently absent has reduced rapidly this year.

Behaviour across the school is positive. This is because leaders' high expectations and a clear system of rewards and sanctions help pupils to understand what is expected of them. Staff apply the behaviour policy positively and consistently. When pupils require additional support, staff use restorative approaches to build and repair relationships. For example, the reflection room and mentoring journal allow pupils to think about how their actions have affected others and what they will do differently in future.

Trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel safe and supported. Bullying is not accepted, and pupils are confident that staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively. This means that pupils benefit from a calm, purposeful learning environment. They are respectful, responsible and ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum. It is engaging and well sequenced, allowing pupils' knowledge to build sequentially over time. Leaders provide teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective training and support. As a result, they understand the curriculum and typically deliver it well.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and use a range of effective teaching strategies. Skilful questioning allows staff to check pupils' understanding, address misconceptions promptly and plan next steps. 'Mini goals' help pupils to know more and remember more as they progress through the curriculum.

Leaders make sure that pupils acquire the important skills and knowledge that they need, including handwriting, spelling and number facts. Phonics is taught effectively. As a result, most pupils gain the skills they need to learn to read. Any pupils who need extra help are supported to catch up quickly.

Staff know pupils' needs very well. This allows them to adapt their teaching and put the right support in place. Staff use modelling and scaffolds and make careful adaptations to ensure that all pupils can access their learning. Leaders monitor these adaptations and make changes when needed. However, some higher-attaining pupils are not stretched to achieve all that they can.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for pupils in the early years. They prioritise positive relationships to ensure that children get off to the best start. Leaders work hard to identify barriers that might prevent children from learning well.

Leaders know what children know because they check regularly. Staff help close any gaps in learning. Their training prepares them well for high-quality interactions with the children. Activities are varied and develop children's skills across all areas of learning, making use of the whole environment. However, indoor areas are better developed for learning than outdoor areas.

Leaders make sure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have the same quality of education as their peers. Children that attend the hub are well taught and make excellent progress, especially when learning to communicate. They are happy and confident because of their secure relationships with staff.

Early reading is prioritised through effective phonics teaching and practised through meaningful play. Most children who start at the school in Reception Year pass the phonics screening check in Year 1. Staff encourage children to work and play together, manage their feelings and build positive relationships. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Leadership at all levels is effective and inclusive. Leaders know pupils and their families extremely well. This gives them a deep understanding of pupils' needs, enabling them to offer well-designed provision such as the hub and 'stepping stones'. Leaders' work impacts positively on pupils and the local community.

Leaders understand what the school does well and where further improvement is needed. They use information about pupils' learning and experiences to set clear priorities. These priorities are focused on improving teaching and learning so that all pupils benefit from high-quality teaching. Leaders' decisions are always made in pupils' best interests, especially for those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders have built a highly positive staff culture. Staff at all levels appreciate the support they receive for wellbeing and workload. There is a purposeful professional development offer in place for all staff, and early career teachers are very well supported.

Parents and carers appreciate the help that they receive from school staff. They describe the school as nurturing and inclusive, and welcome its Christian values. Leaders also work positively with other professionals and the wider community to advance pupils' wellbeing and learning.

Governors are strategic and well informed. They fully understand the school's context. Governors meet their statutory duties and use detailed information to challenge and support leaders effectively. They check how resources are used and ensure that decisions benefit pupils, especially those who are the most vulnerable. Governors are very proud of the school.

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

The school vision, 'Let us love...Let us thrive,' is woven through every aspect of school life. Pupils are known, valued and heard. They learn in a happy, caring school with a supportive and welcoming environment where everyone is included. Pupils feel safe and trust adults to help them with any problems.

As soon as pupils start school, leaders and staff get to know them and their families very well. This means staff can quickly identify any difficulties pupils face and offer support. Leaders ensure that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known (or previously known) to social care, can benefit from everything that the school has to offer.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school building. They are polite and helpful. Bullying is rare, and pupils know that staff will act if unkind behaviour is reported. The school values of love, friendship, respect, endurance, honesty and peace are clear in the secure relationships between pupils, staff and families.

Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their work. The sequenced, progressive curriculum allows them to experience success in all subjects. Careful adaptations are made to ensure

all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can make progress. As a result, pupils achieve broadly in line with national averages by the time they leave the school.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities while at school that they may not otherwise experience. These include residential visits, clubs, trips and leadership roles. Effective pastoral support is provided when needed to ensure pupils' wellbeing. This means that pupils are well prepared for their next steps at school and beyond.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that precise adaptations consistently stretch higher attaining pupils.
 - Leaders should continue their work to remove barriers to attendance and secure sustained improvements in persistent absence.
 - Leaders should ensure that provision is of a consistently high quality across all areas of the early years learning environment.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Christopher Sale.

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, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the diocese.

The inspector confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character.

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Daniel Heather

Lead inspector:

Claire Medhurst, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Janet Tibbits, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Sims, Ofsted Inspector

Tess Sharman, His Majesty's 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

451

Well 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: 272

School capacity

500

Well 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)

52.42%

Well 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

2.88%

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

17.07%

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

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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	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	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	74%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	73%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

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	50%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	60%	Close to average

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	68%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	74%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	58%	Above

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	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	59%	Above

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	50%	68%	-18 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	66%	-9 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	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	81%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	80%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	68%	78%	-10 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	68%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	74%	78%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	78%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	79%	77%	1 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	67%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	61%	81%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	79%	-19 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	86%	79%	7 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)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	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)	20.2%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	22.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	26.3%	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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