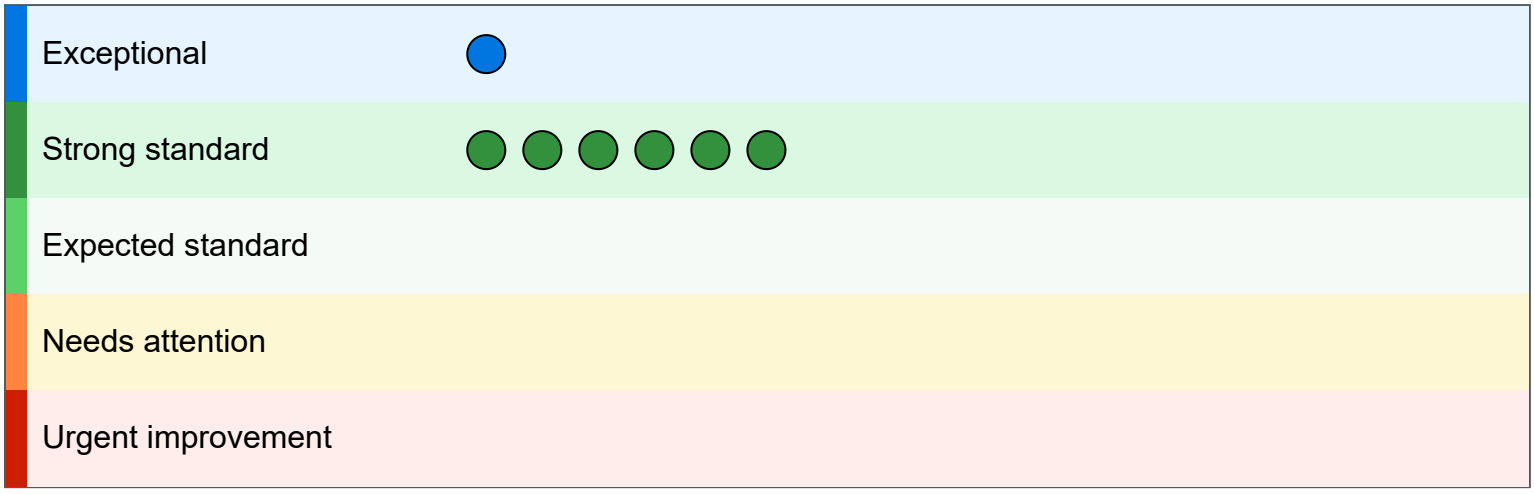
St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Weald

Address: Wigley Bush Lane, South Weald, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 5QN

Unique reference number (URN): 115164

Inspection report: 18 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.

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.

Exceptional

Achievement

Exceptional

Pupils are supremely well prepared for their next steps. The percentage of pupils who attain the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is above the national average and improving year-on-year. Year 6 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are completely ready for their secondary schools. An above-average proportion of pupils are successful in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 4 multiplication tables check. These strong outcomes are a result of the school's dogged focus on securing basic knowledge and skills early.

In other subjects, pupils' achievement is equally impressive. In lessons, pupils are engrossed in the learning. They share what they know enthusiastically. Pupils' recall of their prior learning is very secure. They apply this prior knowledge effectively to new concepts or subject content. The work in pupils' books is consistently high quality, across all subjects.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

The school's attendance figures are above the national average. This is a consequence of leaders' deliberate and comprehensive attendance strategy. From the minute children join in the early years, the school champions and promotes the value of excellent attendance. Leaders and staff reinforce this message boldly and uncompromisingly, through newsletters, daily updates, conversations at the school gate, and meetings with parents and carers. Leaders are meticulous in their analysis of attendance data. If a pupil's attendance causes concern, leaders act quickly to address any needs the pupil may have, for example by providing support to families or adjusting the structure of the school day. This rapid action drives improved attendance patterns.

An atmosphere of calm pervades the school buildings. Pupils learn in peaceful classrooms where there is no disruption to learning. This is a result of the school's scrupulous approach to behaviour management. All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' conduct. They establish clear routines from the moment that children join in early years, then use ongoing reminders and reinforcement. This is supplemented by strong role modelling from staff and older pupils. Pupils know precisely what is expected of them. Their self-discipline, respectful demeanour and positivity are remarkable. Instances of poor behaviour, including allegations of bullying, are incredibly rare. Staff deal with these swiftly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a custom-made, highly ambitious curriculum. This gives teachers the precise information that they need on lesson content as well as essential subject-specific

vocabulary. The curriculum balances precision and structure with the flexibility teachers need to adapt their teaching according to pupils' needs. They do this expertly.

The school places the utmost priority on teaching early reading, writing and mathematics from the moment children join the Reception Year. This ensures that children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 secure the basic knowledge and skills they need rapidly. It prepares them well for increasingly complex learning across the curriculum. All staff are acutely aware of which pupils have gaps in their basic knowledge. They address these swiftly to ensure that no one falls behind in the curriculum.

Leaders' accurate quality assurance checks support consistently skilful teaching. Leaders act decisively when they identify an area for development, for example, by providing targeted training or high-quality mentoring. Consequently, teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge is considerably well developed.

Nothing is left to chance in the way the curriculum is implemented. Leaders have designed an intentional approach to the structure of each lesson. This enables teachers to develop pupils' knowledge securely and incrementally. For pupils, knowing there is a predictable pattern to each lesson enables them to thrive and learn extremely well. Teachers' strong fidelity to this approach particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Early years

Strong standard

The carefully designed early years curriculum ensures that children get off to a flying start. Leaders prioritise early reading, writing and mathematics, alongside a sharp focus on communication and language. This gives children the basic knowledge and skills that they need for later learning at the earliest stage of their education. Daily, high-quality phonics lessons develop children's knowledge of letters and sounds so that they make great headway towards reading and writing fluency. Songs, rhymes and stories foster children's love of language and literature. Learning across the early years curriculum prepares children extremely well for key stage 1.

Leaders' deliberate choices about the structure of learning in the Reception Year enable children to quickly secure the knowledge and skills that they need. During teacher-led sessions and play-based learning, staff interact skilfully with children to move their learning on. Staff's strong knowledge of children's needs enables them to provide targeted support. They do this by modelling key language or by asking carefully crafted questions. This happens during formal, planned interactions as well as through incidental conversations at the water tray or in the cloakroom.

The school builds trusting relationships with parents and carers of children in the early years. These strong partnerships endure throughout pupils' time at the school and add value to their learning experiences.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders are determined that every pupil gets the best possible chance to be successful. Their comprehensive systems mean that pupils' needs are identified as swiftly as possible.

Leaders ensure that staff have precise knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, staff carefully and deliberately plan the support that these pupils need to access the curriculum. Similarly, leaders ensure that staff know exactly which pupils are disadvantaged, and what their barriers to learning are. The school provides targeted staff training on supporting pupils' individual needs. As a result, staff are highly skilled at adapting their teaching so that all pupils can achieve well.

Leaders and staff build trusting relationships with parents and carers to enhance their work with disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders are scrupulous in their checks on the impact of the support pupils receive so that they can make adjustments if necessary. When needed, leaders seek support and advice from external professionals, for example speech and language therapists. Leaders plan the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant, strategically. They target the specific challenges pupils face, for example by funding training for mental health first-aiders to support pupils with social and emotional difficulties. Overall, leaders' actions to reduce or remove pupils' barriers to learning are highly effective.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Strong leadership sits behind all aspects of the school's work. Leaders at all levels, including governors, share the same lofty ambitions for all pupils to be successful. Every decision leaders make is carefully considered and focused on providing the best possible standards of education and care for pupils. This starts with a focus on pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who face other barriers to learning.

Leaders know their school inside out. They are highly reflective and continually focused on bringing about improvements to pupils' experiences of school. To this end, leaders monitor provision systematically to check what is working well and what could be strengthened. This monitoring informs leaders' improvement work. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties. Their wide-ranging experience and expertise add genuine value to the school. They use their knowledge skilfully to provide support and challenge to leaders as they work towards their goals. When the school is tested, for example when it changed the structure of the early years by admitting an additional 30 children, governors and leaders work collaboratively and highly effectively to minimise any negative impact on pupils and staff.

There is a high degree of collaboration and information-sharing among stakeholders at the school. Pupils, staff, governors and leaders decide on the school's annual priorities for improvement. Staff voice informs the design of the training and development plan. This leads to staff feeling strongly valued, with high levels of motivation. The training they receive means they are well equipped to fulfil their roles as effectively as possible. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's approach to pupils' personal development takes careful consideration of pupils' needs. Leaders identify clear goals for pupils' personal development with the same deliberation and intent as they do in subject curriculums. Consequently, by the time pupils leave St Peter's, they have participated in a wide array of enriching activities and

experiences that prepare them admirably for their future lives. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who might not otherwise have such opportunities, benefit particularly from this programme.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education, including relationships and sex education, teaches pupils invaluable knowledge about personal safety and wellbeing, through topics such as healthy relationships and e-safety. Pupils learn about equality and diversity. This leads to a high degree of tolerance and acceptance of difference among pupils. They celebrate the differences between themselves and others through events such as the school's 'Heritage Week'.

In the early years, children learn essential skills for later success at school and in life, such as sharing, cooperation and empathy. When tackling a puzzle, for example, children work together and take turns. They support each other to find the solution. The school's values underpin pupils' daily lives throughout their time at school. As a result, pupils are extremely confident, resilient and independent.

A variety of roles, such as school councillors, play leaders, eco-ambassadors and librarians, develop pupils' character and leadership skills. These roles enable pupils to play a constructive part in school life. They provide context for pupils' learning about fundamental British values, such as democracy and individual freedom.

Leaders carefully track pupils' participation in all of the enrichment opportunities. They use this information to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, benefit from the rich offer. In some instances, leaders design bespoke initiatives to provide pupils with additional pastoral support, for example resilience workshops and transition-to-secondary groups.

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

Pupils feel they belong to a special community at St Peter's. They know staff care for them. This enables pupils to flourish in the safety of the school environment. There is a culture of respect for learning and high aspirations for achievement. Pupils are offered a wealth of opportunities, in and out of the classroom. All of this means that pupils enjoy school. Their attendance rates are high.

The school has ambitious expectations for pupils' academic success. Pupils achieve extremely well. This is thanks to a carefully designed curriculum and consistently high-quality teaching. In mathematics, reading and writing, the school's published data shows that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is consistently above the national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, achieve high levels of success. This is because staff are highly effective in reducing pupils' barriers to learning. All pupils are well prepared for their next steps by the time that they leave this school.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently positive. They have warm, trusting relationships with each other and with staff. Concerns about bullying are exceedingly rare and resolved swiftly. In the early years, strong routines are established quickly. This helps children make a

wonderful start to school life. Staff and older pupils are excellent role models. They remind younger pupils of what great behaviour looks like as they move up through the year groups.

A deliberately planned and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities enriches the school's offer. This gives pupils opportunities to develop new skills, learn about different faiths and cultures and enjoy new experiences. Examples of such activities include a trip by train to Kew Gardens, fencing club and visits to a range of places of worship. The many activities that pupils have taken part in by the time they leave the school extend their horizons and prepare them very well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

• Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Victoria Dorrington.

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, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. They also spoke with curriculum leaders and teaching staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in November 2019.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

In September 2024, the school temporarily increased its pupil admission number from 60 to 90 pupils. This ‘bulge’ year is currently in Year 1.

Headteacher: Iain Gunn

Lead inspector:
Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Nerrissa Bear, His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector
Benjamin Axon, 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 18 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

455
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

352
Close to 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)

2.64%
Well below 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

2.86%
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

3.96%
Well below 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	93%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	98%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	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	97%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	98%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	98%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	95%	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	96%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	98%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	96%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	94%	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	98%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	95%	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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
2022/23 (final)	83%	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		62%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24		62%	
2022/23 (final)	83%	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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
2022/23 (final)	100%	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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
2022/23 (final)	83%	59%	Above

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
2022/23 (final)	83%	66%	17 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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 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%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
2022/23 (final)	100%	77%	23 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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	83%	79%	4 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 (1 term)	3.5%	5.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.7%	5.9%	Below

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 (1 term)	6.3%	14.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.9%	16.2%	Below

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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