

St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Address: Windmill Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands, B66 3LX

Unique reference number (URN): 104000

Inspection report: 10 February 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is high across the school, with overall rates well above national figures and persistent absence notably low. From the moment children join early years, leaders and staff set firm expectations with families. They make clear why it is important for pupils to come to school every day. They encourage parents and carers to talk to them if they need any help with getting their child to school. Staff track individual and family attendance closely. This helps them to spot concerns early and act before issues grow. Staff work well with external agencies to secure and sustain improvements.

Leaders and staff have created an orderly and respectful environment, where routines and expectations are clear. Pupils meet the high expectations with ease. They move around the school sensibly. Social times are friendly. Pupils play cooperatively and manage minor issues with maturity. In lessons, pupils are focused, listen carefully and show highly positive attitudes to learning. Leaders ensure bullying or discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils feel safe and know who to approach for help should the need arise. When pupils struggle with their emotions, staff respond with care and understanding. Pupils are taught helpful strategies, such as breathing techniques, to support self regulation .

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff have an astute understanding of what pupils in their school need to learn. They have used this insight to shape the ambitious, broad and well-sequenced curriculum.

When leaders spot any unevenness in teaching, they act quickly. Through coaching and training, leaders ensure high levels of consistency in teaching. Staff have a depth of knowledge across the subjects they teach, coupled with the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum extremely well.

Teachers utilise clear explanations, purposeful questioning and carefully crafted activities to help pupils learn and connect new ideas. Knowledge is carefully built upon as pupils move through the school. Lessons provide many opportunities for pupils to acquire new vocabulary and to express their ideas with confidence. Teachers carefully consider the learning needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Skilful support and use of resources ensures that pupils with SEND fully access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils achieve well and learn the important knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Those at the early stages of reading benefit from high-quality phonics lessons and timely extra help. The teaching of handwriting is a strength. Pupils develop accurate letter formation and their work is beautifully presented.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion sits at the centre of the school's work. Leaders have created a culture, where every pupil is supported to excel and to grow into a confident, well-rounded individual,

whatever their starting point. Staff use their knowledge of pupils to spot emerging needs early. They act quickly and with precision to reduce any barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care.

Pupils' needs are identified promptly through a clear cycle of checking, planning and reviewing support. Thorough checks by school staff and external agencies help leaders to pinpoint the exact help pupils need. The school works well with outside professionals, including therapists, to ensure the pupils with the most complex needs are very well supported.

Staff benefit from regular training, coaching and guidance on inclusive approaches. As a result, they make powerful use of visual supports, sensory tools and technology, for example, to help pupils fully engage in learning across the curriculum.

Additional funding is used diligently to provide disadvantaged pupils with high impact targeted teaching and personalised pastoral help. As a result, these pupils make clear gains in both learning and confidence and attend school regularly.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have set a clear vision for the school. Staff share leaders' vision and values. This shared commitment means everyone works together with purpose to help pupils thrive. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They also know the community well and understand what pupils need to succeed. Because of this, they remove barriers quickly, so pupils feel safe, included and ready to learn.

Leaders check teaching and the curriculum carefully. They know what is working well and what still needs improving. The actions they take as a result have a continued positive impact on the quality of pupils' work, published outcomes and pupils' attitudes to learning. Their actions are also accelerating pupils' achievement, improving pupils' personal development and rapidly strengthening early years.

Governors play an active role in the life of the school. Together with leaders, they act in the best interest of the pupils. Governors visit the school regularly, review key information and check that duties, including safeguarding, are met. They make thoughtful decisions about funding, such as investing in additional staffing to support pupils' learning.

Staff benefit from well-planned training that builds their skills over time. Coaching, modelling and specialist training help them meet a wide range of pupils' learning and development needs. Staff feel well supported and appreciate the steps leaders take to reduce workload and promote wellbeing. Staff are proud to be part of the St Matthew's team. Morale across the school is high.

Parents speak very positively about the school's work. Most say their children are happy, feel safe and are well supported.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Across the school, pupils secure the essential knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of learning. Their work shows clear progression in writing, fluency in mathematics and confidence in applying prior knowledge in subjects, such as science. Occasionally, pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND), do not consistently develop more detailed knowledge in some subjects as well as they could.

During their time at the school, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Published outcomes reflect this positive picture. By the end of Year 6 in 2025, most pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, achieved standards that were in line with or above the national average across some areas. Pupils consistently perform well in the Year 4 multiplication tables check and the Year 1 phonics check. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Early years

Expected standard 

Effective partnerships with parents and carers help children to begin school confidently. During their time in early years, children make steady gains in their learning. Those children who do not meet the expected level of development by the end of Reception, receive extra help in Year 1. This helps to close any gaps in learning.

The curriculum is carefully planned and prioritises early reading, writing, mathematics and physical development. Most children learn to read with increasing confidence by the end of Reception. Children typically access a range of meaningful activities. For example, tasks that help them develop strength in their hands and fingers to hold a pencil well and those that build their understanding of number. Sometimes, however, the activities do not quite match what children already know, so their progress is not as rapid as it could be.

Some adults use stories, play and purposeful talk well to build children's vocabulary. In one example, children articulately discussed 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' story while making 'pancakes' for the trolls in the mud kitchen. While some interactions extend language well, some are less effective. Consequently, a few children miss chances to develop their vocabulary more broadly.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a caring and respectful culture, where pupils take the school rules, 'be safe, be ready, and be respectful', seriously. Pupils confidently explain how these rules guide their choices each day, whether they are working in lessons, playing outside with friends or keeping themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils are respectful, thoughtful and kind.

The school's approach to personal development helps pupils to learn how to stay safe, to make sensible choices and build healthy relationships. Pupils speak articulately about the potential risks they may face, both online and offline. They know when to seek help from a

trusted adult. In lessons, pupils discuss different cultures, moral choices and events in the world with increasing maturity. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values develops securely.

A range of clubs and visits widens pupils' horizons. These include computing club, trips to the seaside and a space centre. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported to participate fully. Involvement in community projects and fundraising activities strengthens pupils' sense of belonging and responsibility. Leaders have recently begun to analyse the enrichment participation of different groups of pupils. While this is a positive step, they are not yet using this information to shape or extend the enrichment offer in ways that more closely reflect pupils' interests and aspirations.

Pastoral support for pupils is highly effective. Staff help pupils learn to talk about their feelings, build friendships and solve problems calmly. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. They use this understanding to match support to individual needs. Vulnerable pupils benefit from targeted help, such as art therapy and wellbeing sessions. Families appreciate the guidance the school provides. This joined-up approach means pupils feel well supported and secure.

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

Pupils at St Matthew's feel proud to be part of their school. From the moment pupils enter the school grounds, walk past the school office and into their classrooms, they receive a warm welcome from all adults. Leaders and staff make sure that pupils feel safe and ready to learn.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk about their work with pride. They learn to read with confidence and speak excitedly about the books they enjoy, including those borrowed from the outdoor school library. In writing, pupils work hard to improve their ideas and presentation, with many writing neatly and legibly, earning the much talked about pen licence. In mathematics, pupils explain their methods clearly and show a secure understanding of concepts. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Staff know individual pupils well. When help is needed, they act quickly and with care so that all pupils can learn successfully. Pupils benefit from timely and well-tailored support. Examples include practical resources, visual aids and individual workstations. These help pupils to learn successfully and grow in independence.

Pupils treat each other with courtesy. Classrooms are calm and focused. Staff respond with patience and care, when pupils need support. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly should it occur. Attendance is high for all groups of pupils.

A suitable range of clubs and experiences enrich school life. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, enjoy activities such as sewing, creative writing, keyboard and ukulele. Trips to places, like museums and the zoo, make learning memorable. Leadership roles, such as

school councillor, digital leader and librarian, help pupils to understand the importance of teamwork, fairness and how they can contribute to their school and wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, consistently secure the detailed knowledge they need across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should make fuller use of the information they gather about pupils' engagement in enrichment activities to shape and enhance the offer so that it reflects pupils' interests and aspirations even more closely.
 - Leaders and staff should ensure that in the early years, experiences build more closely on children's prior learning and that adults use rich, purposeful talk so all children benefit from frequent opportunities to develop their vocabulary.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rebecca Overton

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 the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and also a representative from the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is situated on 2 sites. Early years and key stage 1 are on one site and key stage 2 on the second site across the road.

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. Its last section 48 inspection took place in December 2024.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Fiona Deakin

Lead inspector:

Usha Devi, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Clair McNeill, Ofsted Inspector

Karen Hambleton, His Majesty's Inspector

Madeleine Griffin, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

459

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

464

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)

41.93%

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

2.18%

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

12.64%

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 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	72%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	78%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average

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	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	71%	Close to average

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	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	70%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	65%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	76%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	76%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	69%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	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	77%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	73%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	58%	Above
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	84%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	77%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	96%	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	70%	68%	2 pp
2024/25 (revised)	65%	69%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	67%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	66%	0 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	76%	80%	-4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	69%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	83%	80%	3 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	77%	78%	-1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	73%	78%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	78%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	79%	77%	2 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	84%	80%	4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	77%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	79%	0 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	96%	79%	17 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)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.4%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	9.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.9%	16.2%	Close to average

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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