

Oakhill Church School

Address: Oakhill, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 5AQ

Unique reference number (URN): 141800

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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a highly inclusive school culture which is clearly understood and demonstrated by staff and pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are assessed precisely, accurately and at the earliest opportunity. Leaders have embedded robust systems and effective processes. These support staff well to use their expertise, gained over time, to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and address other barriers to learning for pupils.

Leaders maintain rigorous oversight of the school's provision for pupils who need additional support or adaptations. Where appropriate, leaders work with other professionals to strengthen the support they offer, including with the local authority. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained to identify and reduce or remove any barriers to learning which pupils face. Staff also adapt their approaches swiftly as barriers shift and change. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to secure a collaborative and well-informed approach to supporting pupils who need something additional or more bespoke.

Additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils, is well informed through leaders' detailed knowledge of the challenges that disadvantaged pupils are likely to face. As they are in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, leaders are meticulous in considering pupils' needs across all aspects of their school experiences and external influences. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit fully from the support in place for them.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

School leadership is new since the previous inspection. Leaders have been unfaltering in their focus to create a highly inclusive culture which puts pupils' learning, development and preparation for life beyond school at the heart of their actions and decision-making. Leaders hold a consistently detailed and accurate view of the school's quality of provision. This is informed through their close and insightful monitoring and evaluation of the impact they make. Leaders make astute decisions which have led to rapid improvement across all aspects of the school.

Expertise in governance and the wider trust is highly effective. It ensures that leaders get the challenge and support they need in their roles and helps to secure rapid improvements. Leaders are tenacious in their actions. They take the utmost care and consideration to maintain staff wellbeing and manage workloads so that staff can continue to deliver a positive experience for all pupils.

Professional staff learning is prioritised by leaders and supported strongly by the wider trust. Staff are empowered to aspire highly, which they do, alongside a shared understanding of the school's commitment to improvement. This includes non-teaching staff and those at the start of their teaching career.

Leaders' work to strengthen whole school community cohesion is notable. It was brought to life in the recent collaborative project work to create the school's outdoor learning. Parents

and carers have many positive views about the school's journey of improvement. They value the school's efforts to deliver an appropriate and inclusive quality of education for their children.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school promotes the importance of high attendance. Leaders review attendance information meticulously and work closely with families to remove barriers which make it difficult for pupils to attend regularly. The school is tenacious in seeking solutions to the challenges that pupils and their families face. This includes securing funding for breakfast club places, using staff expertise to develop trust in parental relationships with the school and celebrating improvements. These actions impact positively on individual rates of attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance rates improve rapidly and persistent absence has reduced.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' behaviour, particularly their behaviours for learning. This work has been successful and pupils recognise this positive change. High expectations of behaviour are evident in the calm classrooms and pupils' harmonious play and interactions during social times. Pupils do not have concerns about the behaviour of their peers, including bullying. They have confidence that staff will address any concerns and trust the systems that leaders have put in place to enable them to speak up and be heard if needed. Work to secure leaders' high expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes starts in the early years. Children are taught to take turns, share and learn collaboratively. The skilled approach to inclusion ensures that where pupils need additional support to manage their behaviour, they receive this quickly and successfully.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the curriculum and how well it is taught. They have designed a curriculum model which is carefully sequenced so that pupils build their learning securely. It covers the essential learning in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as a wide range of other subjects.

Leaders have deliberately chosen to prioritise the important foundational skills in reading, writing, spoken language and mathematics to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, which have occurred over time. Reading is taught particularly effectively alongside promoting a love of reading. In mathematics, leaders have strengthened the curriculum in response to weaker outcomes in recent years. Leaders have focused on important skills for writing such as letter formation, handwriting and spelling. These improvements are at an early stage of development, and need more time to embed across the school. Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to teach the range of subjects in the broad and balanced curriculum.

Typically, staff use a range of teaching strategies well. These include recapping and revisiting previous learning and vocabulary, clear explanations of new concepts and careful

questioning to check pupils' understanding. Leaders have modelled clearly an approach to how work is presented and pupils' progress is mapped out towards clear end points. Staff make highly effective adaptations to their teaching to meet the full range of pupils' needs.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is designed effectively to meet the needs of the children. Staff often draw on children's interests to engage them in carefully considered learning opportunities. Staff know children well. Staff build secure relationships with families to share details about their children. Typically, they use this knowledge to provide children with what they need to make progress from their starting points and increase their independence. Leaders' carefully considered changes to the learning environment enhance children's learning further. Where children demonstrate barriers to learning or present with special educational needs and/or disabilities which require additional provision, staff quickly put support in place. They are skilled in knowing and applying the strategies and adaptations that will have a positive impact.

Early reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised from the start in the Nursery, with an emphasis on communication and language. Children in the Nursery start to familiarise themselves with the sounds they need for early phonics learning. This ensures that children develop the knowledge and skills they need for learning in Year 1 and beyond.

Staff interact positively with children to extend their learning and encourage curiosity. This is particularly successful in the Nursery. For example, staff model the use of new vocabulary and provide opportunities for children to practise this through role play or problem-solving activities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school teaches pupils how to think deeply about their role in the world around them. Collective worship opportunities and leaders' carefully considered curriculum drivers, including global responsibility, encourage pupils' awareness of difference in aspects such as culture and belief. Pupils are well versed in 'take care of yourself, take care of others, take care of the world around you' but also appreciate why this is important in their lives. The school's involvement in charity work is an integral part of pupils' personal and academic learning.

The work to enhance pupils' personal development begins in the early years. Here, children learn to make thoughtful and responsible choices. The school's offer to widen pupils' horizons and provide experiences and opportunities is growing. While pupils and families would value more opportunities, leaders have ensured that what is on offer is designed well enough to strengthen pupils' character. It provides pupils with a self-confidence which strengthens their resilience and independence. Leaders' prioritisation of pupils' wellbeing, underpinned by highly effective pastoral support, ensures that pupils know how to take care of their mental health. Leaders build in opportunities to pause, reflect, seek calm and balance in the outdoor environment. This equips pupils with effective strategies to manage the demands of daily life.

Pupils learn an appropriate relationships and sex education and health education curriculum. This helps them to understand risk and develop positive friendships. Typically, older pupils recall what they learn about world religions and key fundamental British values. Younger pupils learn this in age-appropriate ways. At times, there is some muddled understanding around this aspect of the personal development programme due to the variety of values and concepts that pupils learn about. That said, leaders have ensured that pupils are prepared well for their next stage, which will likely be very different from the small, inclusive and nurturing community that Oakhill offers them.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils have not achieved as well as they should in national tests and assessments over time. Leaders' actions to improve the curriculum and ensure a highly inclusive approach to learning and development have secured some recent improvements, notably in reading and writing. These areas are now in line with pupils' achievements nationally. The impact of leaders' improvements to the mathematics curriculum are not demonstrated in published outcomes. They are, however, evident in pupils' current learning.

Leaders' actions have resulted in the Year 1 phonics screening check outcomes improving over time and now pupils achieve higher than other pupils nationally. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to read new words and sounds. Most pupils are confident readers by the end of key stage 2.

Across the curriculum, pupils recall what they have learned increasingly well. They progress steadily through the curriculum. Leaders' current work ensures that this happens with greater consistency across subjects and classes. This prepares pupils increasingly well for moving on from Oakhill.

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

Pupils start each day with joy and a sense of pride in their school. They are welcomed warmly with music and by staff that show genuine interest in their wellbeing and readiness to start the day. Pupils take this positivity into their first learning tasks of the day. These are designed to target the important knowledge they need to develop fluent reading, writing and number skills. This has been a deliberate focus by leaders to ensure that pupils improve their attainment in national tests and assessments. Pupils enthuse about their learning. They are motivated to know more in the subjects they study because leaders have made significant improvements to the curriculum. This helps pupils to increasingly progress well and be prepared successfully for the next steps in their education.

Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils are known in depth by staff. This enables pupils' needs and barriers to learning and development to be met swiftly and with precision. As a result, pupils benefit from a school community that is highly

inclusive and enables them to learn successfully. Pupils value the systems that support them to meet staff's high expectations of their conduct and behaviours for learning. These include clear routines that start in the early years. Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of respect. Instances of unkind behaviour, bullying or any form of discriminatory behaviour are rare. Pupils actively encourage each other's independence and celebrate successes. Celebration assemblies are a highlight for pupils and their families.

Pupils' academic learning is enhanced by a wider offer that clearly focuses on their wellbeing and understanding of the wider world. Pupils are encouraged to take time to reflect and form their own views and opinions. This is developed through the school's collective worship opportunities and the values-based ethos that runs through all the school does. This equips pupils well for life beyond Oakhill Church School.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed the impact of their work, and the work of staff, on strengthening important foundational skills, particularly in pupils' mathematics and writing.
 - Leaders should increase the sustained impact of their work, and continue to develop the expertise of staff, in order to secure consistently strong standards across all areas of the school's work.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nikki Edwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beverley Hobbs.

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 executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the assistant director for education from the trust and school staff and pupils during the inspection. In addition, the lead inspector met with the deputy CEO, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the trust local committee and a further governance representative.

This school is registered as having a Christian (Church of England) religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in July 2022.

The school uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery provision for children from 2 years old.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The executive headteacher, the head of school and the special educational needs coordinator have started in their roles since the last inspection. The school has experienced significant changes in staff, which include several periods of maternity leave, since the 2023 inspection.

Executive Headteacher: Stephanie Dowley

Lead inspector:

Leanne Thirlby, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Andrew Evans, 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

128

Below 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

150

Below 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)

18.95%

Close to 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

0.78%

Below 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

10.16%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	45%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	60%	Below

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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	84%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	71%	Below

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	53%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	58%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	44%	73%	Below

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	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	29%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	43%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	43%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	29%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	29%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	29%	68%	-39 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	29%	67%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	57%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	57%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	43%	78%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	43%	78%	-35 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	29%	80%	-51 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	29%	79%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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 (2 term)	6.8%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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)	18.8%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	23.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%	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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