

Bethany Church of England Junior School

Address: Knole Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4DJ

Unique reference number (URN): 142100

Inspection report: 23 June 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.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils have not been well prepared for secondary school. Published outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are below national averages. Some improvement is emerging. Leaders are now ensuring that pupils cover the essential learning in English and mathematics that they missed in previous years. As a result, pupils' gaps in knowledge are beginning to close.

Pupils who did not learn to read well in the past are catching up because the teaching of reading is now more effective. More pupils gain an understanding of what they read as a result. There are improvements in pupils' handwriting and in their writing composition. Weaknesses in spelling remain. Very recent changes to the teaching in mathematics are helping pupils to secure important basic skills in number. Pupils across the school are becoming more fluent in their recall of multiplication tables. However, pupils still have gaps in their mathematical knowledge.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

The school has strengthened its work to improve pupils' attendance since September 2025. A team of knowledgeable staff work relentlessly to ensure that the school is doing all it can to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving quickly and is now in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing, including for pupils who are disadvantaged.

Leaders' work to ensure that all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct in and out of lessons is not complete. Even so, they have made improvements. For example, suspensions have reduced markedly. Effective routines create a calm start to each day. Typically, pupils show positive attitudes in lessons. However, staff do not routinely identify or take action when pupils' behaviour between lessons and around the school falls short of what leaders expect. It takes too long for pupils to follow staff's instructions at social times. Pupils raise concerns that a minority of their peers are disrespectful to one another. On occasions, when teaching does not build on what pupils know already, a minority of pupils can lose concentration or sit waiting for adults to help them.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

The curriculum identifies what pupils are to learn and when. It extends across a suitable range of subjects. However, there are weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum. A raft of professional development is building staff's subject knowledge and skills. Teaching is improving steadily as a result. Since December 2025, a deliberate focus on improving the teaching of pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is proving successful. This is helping pupils who have underachieved in the past to catch up. Pupils who are at the early stage of reading receive teaching to develop their phonics knowledge. However, this does not routinely enable pupils to apply their phonics to spell accurately. Regular errors in spelling remain as a result.

Staff's use of assessment is developing. However, teaching does not enable pupils to learn the depth of knowledge they should know for their age. In mathematics, for example, some pupils find it difficult to solve complex number problems because they are not secure in all the essential mathematical knowledge and skills they need. As a result, some pupils do not learn the curriculum as intended.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

In the past, pupils' needs were not identified quickly enough. This is not the case now. The school identifies pupils' needs accurately. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive precise pastoral support. These pupils benefit from a range of specific scaffolds and resources to support learning. They gain independence by using their individual writing toolkits and visual resources. The school is working at pace to improve the implementation of the curriculum for these pupils. However, sometimes pupils' academic targets do not address their needs precisely enough, including for pupils who require bespoke curriculums.

The school's deliberate focus on assessing pupils' language skills as soon as they join is starting to make a difference. On the whole, this ensures that pupils who speak English as an additional language receive the right support. This widens their vocabulary and develops their early language and communication skills. Pupils who are young carers benefit from additional pastoral and curriculum support. The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils increasingly effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are now attending school more regularly. However, there is not stringent oversight of the school's work to address gaps in disadvantaged pupils' English and mathematics knowledge.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Over time, leaders and the trust have not ensured that the school has prepared pupils for their next stage of education. Leaders and the trust are working with integrity to secure the necessary improvements. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively. For example, they check that the school meets the requirements for pupils who have education, health and care plans. There is detailed oversight of safeguarding.

The trust commissions external evaluation to check how well the school is achieving and that its own internal evaluations of the school's performance are accurate. Leaders use support from trust staff effectively. Staff welcome the professional learning opportunities they receive. This is improving their subject knowledge and teaching over time. Pupils who have underachieved previously are starting to catch up as a result. Staff value the way leaders support their workload and wellbeing. Parents and carers recognise the care and support that staff provide for their children.

The trust and leaders know that it is too soon to see demonstrable impact in all aspects of the school's work. For example, there are weaknesses in the programme to develop pupils' character.

The programme to support pupils' personal development meets statutory requirements. Leaders have appropriate ambitions for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They promote equality and diversity through the curriculum. The relationships and sex education and health education curriculum includes all the essential content that pupils should learn. Pupils learn about keeping physically and mentally healthy and gain a detailed understanding of how to keep safe online.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is well sequenced and includes all the necessary subject content. The school delivers it through a range of lessons, visitors and whole-school assemblies. However, the PSHE curriculum does not have its full intended impact. A minority of pupils do not secure their understanding of tolerance or protected characteristics. Some do not show full respect for cultural diversity in modern Britain. For example, these pupils make racist comments or mimic other pupils for who they are. When leaders know about this, they sort it out straight away. However, some incidents go unreported. This has a negative impact on some pupils' experiences and enjoyment of school.

A range of activities broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils develop their artistic and sporting talents. The school uses additional funding to ensure that all pupils have equal access to extra-curricular activities. These include interesting and relevant activities such as craft and fitness. The curriculum teaches pupils about the rule of law and democracy, for example through engaging with local members of parliament.

Leaders and staff provide a range of pastoral support which is usually well matched to pupils' needs. For example, when pupils need a bespoke approach to start the day this helps them settle quickly and effectively. Pupils who have low self-esteem receive timely and effective support. These pupils benefit greatly. This improves their experience, attendance and enjoyment of school.

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

Pupils have mixed experiences of school. Over time, pupils have not gained the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for secondary school. Leaders know this. Their recent work is proving successful to address the remaining shortfalls in the curriculum and teaching. Pupils recognise the improvements in the school. For example, older pupils know that staff's expectations of what they can achieve are higher than before. However, there remain weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have gaps in their English and mathematical knowledge.

Pupils are safe and attend well. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and work hard. Lunchtime behaviour has improved. Even so, at times, staff do not consistently model the highest of expectations the trust expects. Some staff accept too readily when pupils' behaviour falls short of the behaviour policy, for example when they take too long to respond to staff's instructions at social times. Pupils report that there are occasions when pupils use

derogatory language. When pupils report bullying or inappropriate behaviours, staff address this promptly and effectively. However, some of this goes unreported and reoccurs.

The school works effectively to remove barriers that some pupils have. Young carers receive bespoke support and enrichment, for example. There is a range of effective pastoral support and therapies in place for pupils. Well-thought-out morning routines ensure that the start of each day is calm and purposeful.

There are many opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences. Listening to live orchestras and taking part in football and dance festivals are just a few. Pupils take pride in contributing to school life through the many leadership roles on offer, for example as part of what the school calls the 'readership team' and as school counsellors.

Next steps

- The trust and leaders should ensure they have stringent oversight of all aspects of the school's work so that it continues to improve.
 - The trust and leaders should ensure that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics continues to rise so that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, are well prepared for their next stage of education.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment information astutely to design activities that build on what pupils know already and deepen pupils' knowledge of more complex concepts as soon as they are ready.
 - Leaders need to ensure that staff implement the school's behaviour policy effectively so that pupils demonstrate consistently positive behaviour and conduct.
 - Leaders need to ensure that the personal development programme is implemented consistently well so that pupils show mutual respect of one another.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Coastal Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Howieson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Copsey.

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 the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of other staff. An inspector met with the CEO, a trustee and 4 members of the local governance committee and 2 members of the central team from the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

There is a breakfast and after-school club.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Oasis class provides education for pupils who require a bespoke curriculum. All pupils who attend this class have an education, health and care plan.

Headteacher: Lawrence Woodward

Lead inspector:

Julie Carrington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kathy Maddocks, Ofsted Inspector

Jyotsna Paranjape, 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 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

372

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

384

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)

49.46%

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

3.23%

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

19.89%

Above 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	40%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	35%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	62%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	74%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	55%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	54%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	59%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	60%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	22%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36%	44%	Close to average

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	60%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	60%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	50%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	43%	58%	Below

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	49%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average

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	33%	68%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	22%	69%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	67%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	66%	-31 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	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	81%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	62%	80%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	78%	-21 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	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	47%	78%	-32 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	77%	-35 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	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	38%	81%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	52%	79%	-27 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)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	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)	18.2%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	18.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.1%	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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