

St John's Church of England Primary School, Radcliffe

Address: Johnson Street, Radcliffe, Bury, M26 1AW

Unique reference number (URN): 145560

Inspection report: 16 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Published data from the tests at the end of Year 6 show an improving picture over time. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically achieve results that are close to national averages. A number of pupils join the school at different times. On the whole, from their different starting points, pupils achieve well.

Results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 are lower than national averages. This is because some pupils are new to English. However, leaders make sure that these pupils catch up quickly. As a result, they achieve well in the phonics tests in Year 2.

Leaders make sure pupils progress well through the wider curriculum. Pupils generally talk confidently and knowledgeably about their learning. For example, pupils explained important features of the Industrial Revolution in history and how this changed the lives of the people of Radcliffe.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance sits prominently at the heart of leaders' work. They work creatively and steadfastly to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Consequently, attendance is improving over time. Rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to national averages. Leaders use attendance data in a systematic and astute way. They work effectively with families to identify any barriers to regular attendance to school. Furthermore, leaders ensure that pupils know the importance of coming to school every day, for example through the use of competitions and daily displays of class attendance rates. While the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school remains high, this has reduced significantly.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have established clear routines that everyone follows. Pupils are guided by the school motto, 'Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe'. As a result of these clear expectations, pupils behave well throughout the school day. In lessons, pupils typically try their best. Bullying, including online, and unkind behaviour are rare. Pupils know that any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with effectively. Leaders provide effective support to any pupils who need help to manage their emotions, for instance through access to sensory spaces in school or through work with specially trained staff.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. It is ordered coherently so that learning builds over time. Leaders are reflective in their approach to curriculum design. For instance, they have strengthened the writing curriculum. As a result, staff teach the art of writing clearly in lessons.

In lessons, for the most part, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain new learning. This includes in subjects other than English and mathematics. They break ideas down into smaller chunks. This helps pupils to learn new information well. Typically, teachers check effectively for any gaps in pupils' learning. On occasion, however, gaps in spelling, punctuation and grammar go unnoticed. This leads some pupils to make repeated errors in their written work.

For those pupils with barriers to their learning, teachers make effective use of pair work, technology and targeted support. These strategies, for example, help pupils to access the same learning as their peers well.

If pupils fall behind with their learning, leaders ensure that they catch up in a timely manner. For example, they prioritise appropriately additional reading support. Mathematics is taught well. As such, pupils are ready for the next stage of their learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an early years curriculum that is ambitious for all. They are determined that children in the early years get off to a positive start. Leaders have prioritised training for early years staff to support them in their roles. Generally, staff have the skills to provide the youngest children in the school with the support that they need. Leaders have prioritised vocabulary development. Typically, children benefit from high-quality interactions with staff.

Staff ensure that children learn about the world around them. For instance, they go on nature walks. This helps to expand children's vocabulary as well as enrich their personal development. Staff have instilled positive routines. This means most children are able to sustain concentration for extended periods of time. Any care practices are carried out safely and with dignity.

Despite their varied starting points, children in the early years typically reach a good level of development that is in line with their peers nationally. They are generally ready to make a positive start to Year 1.

Staff develop warm relationships that help children to feel safe and welcomed. Staff help those pupils who struggle to maintain focus well. They provide short pauses to learning and allow access to the 'Rainbow Room'. Typically, this helps pupils to successfully regulate their emotions and resume learning quickly.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have threaded inclusion as a priority throughout the school. They use a range of systems to identify pupils' needs effectively. Leaders place a high priority on getting to know pupils and their families. On the whole, they use this information well to reduce any barriers to learning or wellbeing. For example, leaders work productively with educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. As such, pupils get the support that they need to thrive. For children known to social care, leaders work positively with the local authority's virtual school.

In the main, in lessons, teachers successfully reduce any barriers to pupils' learning, for example through the use of another adult to provide targeted support or visual aids to help pupils access written texts. Leaders promptly adapt any strategies that do not remove barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Leaders have prioritised learning new words and reading. This is particularly helpful for the growing number of pupils who join the school who speak English as an additional language. Generally, this supports these pupils to access the curriculum well.

Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. For instance, they provide financial support for visits and buy books to promote a positive culture of reading.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders' passion and commitment to improve the lives of pupils is palpable. They want the absolute best for pupils. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they have prioritised reading throughout the school. This has had a positive impact on published results and the number of pupils who can read at the expected standard. This is particularly pertinent for the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Those responsible for governance understand the school's context. They share leaders' high ambitions for pupils to succeed and overcome any barriers that they may face. Members of the trust and governors have the skills and knowledge that they need to carry out their role effectively. They fulfil all statutory duties.

Leaders have nurtured positive relationships with parents and carers. The family breakfast events and the food share scheme have helped to break down any barriers to a positive partnership between parents and school staff. Leaders work well with other schools in the trust. They make effective use of professional networks to further their knowledge of school development.

Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to support their workload and wellbeing. For example, leaders make sure staff have the time that they need to organise their work effectively. Moreover, staff know that they can talk to leaders if they have anything on their mind. They are thankful that leaders will always try to help. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a coherent and considered programme of personal development and wellbeing. This takes account of pupils' needs. Leaders have prioritised wellbeing and mental health support. For the most part, this has helped pupils to become resilient.

Leaders work with external agencies such as health professionals and the police to enrich the curriculum. This has ensured that pupils know about the changes that will happen to their bodies in puberty and how to stay safe around water. Furthermore, pupils are taught to stay safe online. They know to report anything that worries them to an adult. Pupils

understand what makes a person a good friend. They know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils feel well prepared to make the transition to secondary school.

Pupils celebrate the diversity of their school. They are proud that this helps everyone belong. Leaders have ensured that pupils understand the significance of important values such as democracy and tolerance. As a result, pupils are proud to serve their school community, for example, through the school council.

The 'Sycamore Seven' list of activities ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to experience the arts, music and participation. For example, pupils visit the theatre and get the chance to play a musical instrument. Leaders track participation at clubs closely. They provide financial support so that nobody misses out on an exciting learning and development opportunity.

Leaders have established a variety of pupil leadership roles, such as 'Active Ambassadors', 'Mini-Middays' and pupil librarians. These develop pupils' communication and teamwork skills effectively. Pupils are proud of their leadership roles. They are happy to do something for the school community.

Pupils are confident to access the pastoral support available in school. They know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have something on their mind. Pupils know that they will get the help that they need.

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

Pupils are happy to attend this improving school. They arrive each morning with a smile on their face and a cheerful greeting to their peers and staff on the playground. Pupils know what is expected of their behaviour. They respond readily to routines. This ensures that each day starts in a purposeful way. Throughout the school day, pupils live out the school motto. They are 'ready', 'respectful' and 'safe'. Pupils are clear that everyone is welcome at this school. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve effectively any worries that they have.

Pupils who need additional help with their learning or wellbeing are generally supported well. For example, they attend the 'Rainbow Room' and 'Calm Quarters' to support them to successfully regulate their emotions and to learn through play. On the whole, pupils make secure progress through the curriculum. They enjoy learning. Where there have been some weaknesses in handwriting in the past, leaders have addressed these appropriately. Consequently, pupils are typically ready for the next stage of their education.

Children in the early years are excited to introduce themselves and each other to visitors to their school. They find awe in the world around them.

Pupils know that coming to school each day develops positive habits for the future and helps you to learn. Pupils are keen to talk about the different competitions that promote positive attendance. As a result, rates of attendance have improved. This includes a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

There is a range of clubs and leadership opportunities for pupils. These help pupils to make a positive contribution to school life. For example, pupils attend sports and chess club. Furthermore, they show a sense of social responsibility. For instance, they raise money for charities by taking part in the school show.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that teachers identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge of writing in a timely way so that pupils can become more successful writers.
 - Leaders should continue to develop their work to reduce the number of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, who are persistently absent from school so that these pupils can benefit from all that school has to offer.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Sycamore Church of England Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ian Young, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Granby .

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 headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with trustees and governors, including the chair of the trust board, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also took account of the views of pupils and parents and carers.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2020.

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher.

Headteacher: Tracey Cansdale

Lead inspector:

Neil Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sharon Cliff, Ofsted Inspector

Ros Munro, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

208

Close to 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

210

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)

53.59%

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

4.33%

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

13.94%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	48%	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	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
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	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	58%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	32%	44%	Below

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	65%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	77%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	61%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average

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	61%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	67%	-10 pp
2022/23 (final)	32%	66%	-35 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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	77%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	80%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	78%	-26 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	61%	78%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	78%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	78%	-9 pp
2022/23 (final)	53%	77%	-25 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	61%	80%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	68%	79%	-11 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	53%	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)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.1%	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)	21.0%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.0%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	23.4%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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