

St Leonards Church of England Primary Academy

URN: 141868 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils typically achieve well at this school. Most make secure progress through the curriculum from their varying starting points. Pupils successfully develop the foundational knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress through the curriculum. Phonics assessments in Year 1 show the school is performing in line with other schools nationally. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly successful and achieve well in comparison with disadvantaged pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes in national tests and assessments at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite the positive picture, some pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar is less secure.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school has a well-considered curriculum in place. It meets the needs of pupils at the school. It takes into account the school's unique context. It provides pupils with a logically ordered pathway from the early years through to the end of Year 6. Leaders understand the strengths in the curriculum and the way it is taught. They provide appropriate ongoing professional development to all staff. This includes for those who are new to teaching. This means that teaching helps pupils build successfully on what they have already learned across the curriculum. Staff have secure subject knowledge. On the whole, they deliver the school's intended curriculum well. Staff adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They check what pupils understand and effectively address any gaps in their knowledge. However, the teaching of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar is not consistently effective.

Early years

Expected standard

The school has an effective early years provision. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is tailored well to meet the specific needs of children who join the school. The provision is safe and resourced well. Classrooms are happy

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and exciting places to be. Learning, both inside and outside of the classroom, is structured well because staff understand the needs of the children in their care. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place. Children benefit from high-quality care and strong relationships are built with each other and with adults from the start. Staff are very aware of children's starting points. Smooth transitions into the school are given a high priority. This includes working closely with families and nursery provisions to ensure that children get off to a positive start. Staff ensure that there is an effective focus on vocabulary and oracy skills. This supports the school's work to develop the key foundational knowledge of reading, writing and number that children will need to be successful learners.

Staff promote reading and the love of books well. As a result, most children develop secure language and vocabulary skills and are well prepared for transition to Year 1 when it comes.

Inclusion

Expected standard

This is an inclusive school. The principle that all pupils deserve the very best, no matter what their backgrounds, is well established. Clear policies and processes are in place to support all staff in their work to provide the best for pupils in their care. Additional funding is used well to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds thrive and achieve. This helps break down barriers to academic or personal development for vulnerable pupils. These strategies also enable staff to provide timely and helpful support where needed. Leaders have an open engagement with parents and carers to effectively support their work to break down barriers for pupils. Staff understand pupils' specific needs. Leaders ensure that staff are well supported to increase their knowledge and expertise. This helps them to respond well to pupils' individual needs. This work starts in the early years as children transition into school. It continues as pupils move through each phase of their education. Effective partnerships with external professionals aid this aspect of the school's work. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from other vulnerable groups are supported well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders know their school and its pupils well. They have a clear understanding of the vulnerabilities and barriers pupils and their families face. Leaders are clear about the strengths of the school. They also have an appropriate understanding of the areas that need to improve. The majority of parents are positive about how the school supports their children. Leaders' actions to improve key elements of provision have had a positive impact on the school's curriculum, teaching and the achievements of pupils. Staff benefit from a range of professional development opportunities to ensure that their classroom practice is effective. In turn, staff are positive about the support they get from leaders, including those who work directly for the multi-academy trust (MAT). Middle leaders are also positive about the development opportunities they have, including in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff also feel that their workload and well-being are given an

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appropriate level of priority by leaders. Those in positions of governance know the school well. Members of the local governing body understand the school's priorities. They are well supported by trustees to hold leaders to account. Leaders benefit from the input of MAT executives. This helps secure sustained improvement in most areas of the school's work.

Personal development and well-being Expected standard The school has a well-designed programme in place to support pupils' personal development and well-being. It includes a range of enrichment opportunities, such as on-site outdoor learning and links to a school in Sierra Leone. Much of the work in this area is underpinned by the school's formal curriculum, including the personal, social and health education programme. The bedrock of the school's offer is based on its ethos and core values. Learning about other faiths and world religions is given a high importance. Promoting harmony and celebrating diversity are also key to the school's work to prepare pupils successfully for life outside of the school gates. The school's work to promote pupils' well-being has many strands. This starts as soon as children join the school. Pupils develop social knowledge, for example, learning formal dining skills. A comprehensive programme of sensory circuits helps pupils who need a more structured and tailored start to the school day. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy diets and exercise in their work in science and also through their popular physical education curriculum. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are positively encouraged by staff to take part in activities to ensure that opportunities to develop their talents and interests are grasped. Taking part in an opera or developing talents in drama and other performing arts are part of the offer here. Learning about different cultures and lifestyles is also supported by a range of focused assemblies and special events. Older pupils have a growing understanding of equalities and the protected characteristics. Relationships and sex education is also taught in an age-appropriate way as pupils move through the school. Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour Needs attention

Attendance is not high enough. Leaders have taken steps to reduce the barriers some pupils face in attending school. However, this is not yet effective enough. This means that some pupils continue to miss too much school. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders, including those in positions of governance, know this. Additional resources and refinement of key strategies are all part of their work to have a bigger impact on this issue. Some improvement is discernible, especially for some individual pupils. However, the impact of this work is not evident more widely. Pupils behave well here. They understand the rules and strive to keep them. Their sense of belonging is clear to see throughout the school day. Small acts of kindness between pupils themselves are plentiful, including at breaktimes or in the dinner hall. Relationships are positive because staff work hard to understand the needs of all pupils. Leaders have high expectations and do not tolerate any form of unkindness or poor behaviour. Leaders and staff have created a caring and nurturing environment across the school. As a result, pupils thrive here. Most enjoy school and are generally achieving well in and out of the classroom.

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

Pupils are proud of their school. They benefit from a start to the school day that is well ordered and welcoming. Parents and carers are positive about the school. They know that their children are happy and are succeeding

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here. This is because the school's inclusive ethos ensures that their children feel a strong sense of belonging. All pupils are welcome here, no matter what their background or barriers. They are prepared well for life beyond the school gates. Those who are new to the school settle quickly because they are accepted by other pupils and supported well by staff. Pupils feel safe here. They talk positively about friendships. Older pupils see how their school has improved since they joined. Poor behaviour is rare. Unkindness is frowned on. Playtimes are marked by lively interactions with thoughtful and sensible mediation for opposing points of view when needed. Pupils understand the rules. Most keep to them well. Staff are always available with gentle reminders when required. Classrooms are happy places where pupils enjoy learning. This is true from Reception all the way through to Year 6, where pupils understand the importance of working hard to achieve well. Pupils from vulnerable groups are also making the progress needed to prepare them for their

next steps

in education. Importantly, as well as high expectations for what pupils can achieve, the school is also instilling a sense of enjoyment in learning about new things. Pupils know that there is more to know. Staff keep learning fun and relevant for pupils. Despite this, some pupils do not attend school as much as they should and do not benefit fully from what the school has to offer.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their work consistently improves pupils' attendance and reduces rates of persistent absence.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum for writing, and how it is taught, supports pupils to achieve consistently well in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/st-leonards-church-of-england-primary-academy-st-leonards-on-sea>