



Church Walk CofE Primary School

Address: Church Walk, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 7EN

Unique reference number (URN): 112361

Inspection report: 10 March 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

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff have warm, nurturing relationships with children. Leaders collaborate with the feeder nursery and with parents and carers, so that children's unique needs are understood from the moment they start school.

The school's early years curriculum identifies clearly what children should learn in the Reception class. Staff plan activities and provide play opportunities that promote this learning. They use their interactions with children to build on what they know and can do across all areas of the curriculum. For example, staff pose pertinent questions to support children's thinking as they experiment with water outside. Staff promote children's language well. They engage them in thoughtful conversations that promote children's communication skills. They read aloud to children, exploring new words that appear in the book to expand their vocabulary.

Children get off to a flying start with developing their early reading skills in the Reception class. They progress well through the phonics programme. Staff are quick to identify where children may be struggling to keep up with the programme. They provide individualised support that focuses sharply on helping pupils to close gaps in their knowledge. This prepares children well for key stage 1. Leaders have developed effective transition processes to support pupils in starting Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture where all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. There is a clear, systematic approach to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers, and with other agencies, to ensure that timely, effective support is in place for each pupil. They complete regular reviews of this provision, which informs decisions about any further support that may be needed. This includes a range of pastoral support as well as help with learning.

Leaders provide effective support to staff to ensure that they understand the school's approaches to meeting pupils' needs. Staff carefully consider the needs of pupils when designing how to deliver new learning. They make adjustments to remove the individual barriers to learning that pupils face. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils. For example, they ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to help all pupils to flourish. Where leaders make use of alternative provision, this appropriately targets the needs of pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that the school's personal development programme is coherent, broad and ambitious. It builds on pupils' understanding of themes over time. These themes include relationships, the wider world and health and wellbeing. The programme is informed by the local context of the school and the needs of pupils. For example, leaders develop

pupils' life skills by providing experiences that pupils may not otherwise encounter. This includes meeting pupils from other schools, and visits to places of worship and to contrasting geographical locations. Through the use of pupil premium funding, leaders carefully consider how to enrich the personal development programme for disadvantaged pupils, and to remove barriers to their learning and wellbeing. This enables these pupils to achieve and to thrive.

The personal development programme, including the relationships and sex education programme, develops pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This includes both online and offline safety. For example, pupils demonstrate that they understand the risks of sharing information online. They are clear that they would go to a trusted adult with any concerns.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of important British values and understand the significance of these in their lives. Pupils understand, and respect, that everyone is unique. They develop an appreciation of diversity. Leaders promote this by enriching the curriculum with creative and cultural opportunities. For example, pupils broaden their experiences through visits to Liverpool, where they visit museums and galleries. This helps to foster pupils' broader development.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of environmental issues. They are keen to make a positive impact on this through their actions. Through their roles in the school council, pupils have developed recycling processes at school and have considered how to reduce water and electricity usage. These opportunities support pupils in becoming active, positive citizens.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils do not develop the knowledge and skills they need in handwriting and number facts. Year 4 multiplication check outcomes have been below average for 3 consecutive years. Leaders' actions to address this are having a positive effect on pupils' learning, but it is too soon to see the long-term impact of this. Currently, pupils do not develop these skills as securely, or swiftly, as they should.

Pupils' knowledge across the wider curriculum builds logically over time, including in mixed-age classes. However, some pupils struggle to remember, in the longer term, the depth of knowledge they need to be prepared for future learning.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, rapidly develop their phonics knowledge. They use this confidently to read and write. Phonics outcomes were above the national average in 2025. Pupils typically achieve in line with national averages at the end of key stage 2.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently realised in practice. Some pupils, in some classes in Years 1 to 6, lose focus in lessons. In the main, teachers address this when it occurs, reminding pupils of the expectations. However, these occasions distract other pupils and make it hard for them to concentrate on their learning. Some pupils do not live up to the school's rules when moving around the school independently. This hinders leaders from creating a consistently calm, orderly environment. That said, pupils behave well at social times and have positive relationships with their friends and with staff. Leaders provide effective support to pupils who struggle to regulate their emotions. Incidents of discrimination or bullying are rare, and staff act appropriately in dealing with them.

Leaders and staff promote positive attendance. They work closely with families to identify barriers to attendance and provide suitable support to help them attend. Leaders take appropriate action when a pupil's absence causes concern. These actions have had a positive impact on improving the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent from school. The school's attendance rates are broadly in line with the national average and are above average for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teachers check how well pupils are learning. However, there are inconsistencies in how effectively these checks are used to identify, and in turn address, gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders leaders from ensuring that pupils catch up quickly when they struggle in their learning. It also makes it difficult for leaders to check that pupils are remembering what they have been taught.

Leaders identify where improvements to the curriculum are needed. They take appropriate, well-considered actions to address this. For example, leaders made recent changes to improve the teaching of handwriting and arithmetic. However, these developments are in their infancy.

The school's curriculum is ambitious, broad and engaging. Leaders have defined the important knowledge that pupils should know. They have considered the mixed-age classes when designing the curriculum, to ensure that pupils' learning builds each year.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They explain new concepts clearly and use practical resources to model strategies to pupils. Teachers expand pupils' vocabulary by teaching them new, subject-specific words. Staff make effective adaptations so that all pupils can be successful in lessons. They consider the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide individualised support. This helps to remove barriers to their learning.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Governors are clear about their vision for the school. However, they do not gain assurances about the quality of education at the school. They do not have a rigorous oversight of the curriculum quality and its impact. This means they do not challenge and support leaders as

effectively as they could. Governors are supportive of staff, leaders and pupils. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities, for example they closely check the school's safeguarding procedures and are vigilant in checking the school's finances.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and aspects that need further development. They ensure that pupils' best interests remain at the centre of decisions they make about improvements to the school. For example, leaders prioritised developing the outdoor provision to maximise children's learning opportunities in the early years. They proactively seek support from specialists to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the support they need.

Leaders work in partnership with other schools to develop their practice. They ensure that staff build on their expertise through accessing a range of professional development opportunities. This includes completing external training courses and receiving support from specialists. Staff feel valued by leaders. They appreciate the consideration leaders give to their workload and wellbeing.

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

Pupils have positive relationships with staff and with each other. They know that they can share their worries with trusted adults at school. Children in the early years enjoy engaging with the nurturing staff. Older pupils support others through their roles as play leaders and reading buddies. Leaders tackle any bullying or discrimination, should they occur.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They enter the school calmly when they arrive and behave positively at social times. However, there are occasions, during lessons, where some pupils become disengaged. This distracts others from their learning. While pupils are keen to learn, the quality of their work in books does not consistently reflect positive attitudes to learning. Leaders are aware of this. They are in the early stages of sharpening the school's behaviour policy to ensure that their expectations are consistently understood and adhered to by pupils.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents. Leaders use additional funding to ensure that all pupils can access, without financial barriers, musical instrument tuition. Over half of the pupils in the school learn to play an instrument. Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular physical activities. These include tennis, gymnastics, dance, netball and football. The school also offers clubs linked to pupils' interests. These include art, LEGO, chess and nature clubs. Leaders track participation in these activities. There is high take-up from pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils learn a broad curriculum. Leaders enrich this with trips that broaden pupils' experiences and prepare them for life in modern Britain. Staff support pupils with SEND effectively in lessons, which reduces barriers to their learning. Pupils typically achieve well in national tests. However, some do not develop the important knowledge they need, such as in mathematics and handwriting. Governors do not provide effective challenge to hold leaders to account for improving this aspect of their work.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed recent improvements to the teaching of handwriting and mathematics to ensure that pupils gain the fluency and knowledge they need in these aspects of their learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that they, and teachers, use assessment processes effectively to support them in identifying and addressing precise gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils understand and consistently follow the school's expectations of their behaviour, so that they can learn in a calm environment and focus fully on their learning.
 - Governors should strengthen their oversight of the quality and impact of the curriculum so that they can provide effective challenge and support to leaders.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Kay Wilson.

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, school leaders and representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the diocese. Inspectors also spoke with staff, pupils and parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in June 2024.

The school makes use of one alternative provision; this alternative provision is unregistered.

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Davies

Lead inspector:

Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Andy Beattie, His Majesty's 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 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

86

Well 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

105

Well 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)

8.14%

Well below 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

4.65%

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

15.12%

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 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	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	85%	71%	Above

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	64%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

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 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	33%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	33%	80%	-46 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	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)	13.4%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	21.4%	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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