

Saighton Church of England Primary School & Pre-School

Address: Saughton Lane, Saughton, Chester, Cheshire, CH3 6EG

Unique reference number (URN): 111350

Inspection report: 14 July 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders make attendance a high priority. They consistently promote the importance of regular attendance to pupils and their families. For example, they communicate proactively with parents to explain the impact of missing school. Leaders check attendance patterns carefully and provide help quickly if concerns arise. They work closely with families to find the right support. For example, leaders arrange extra help for pupils who feel anxious about coming to school. As a result, pupils' overall attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is above national averages and continues to improve. Very few pupils miss school regularly.

Pupils behave very well. They are polite and respectful and show good manners. Staff teach the school's routines and high expectations consistently well. This means that classrooms are calm. Pupils listen carefully to staff and walk around the school in an orderly manner. Leaders have created a culture in which discrimination is not tolerated. Reports of bullying are very rare. Leaders act swiftly and effectively when incidents of unkind behaviour occur. Leaders give timely, personal and effective support to pupils who struggle to understand and manage their emotions, including some pupils with SEND. This support has a positive impact on their behaviour.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide an ambitious and effective personal development programme that supports pupils to become kind and respectful. This includes a well-planned relationships and health education programme that prepares pupils well for life beyond school. For example, pupils have a detailed understanding of the risks associated with online communication and image sharing. Leaders skilfully adapt the curriculum to address the risks that they know pupils may face. For example, pupils learn about road safety and know how to stay safe in the sun.

Staff plan activities that support pupils to develop a sense of moral purpose. For instance, pupils speak proudly about the fundraising they do for charities. They say that this is important because they believe that everyone should have the same opportunities that they do. Pupils speak about equality with passion, care and precision.

Leaders think proactively about how to support pupils' wellbeing. For example, pupils know that they can ask for help using the 'worry monsters' that are in every classroom. The pastoral support that leaders provide is timely and highly effective. Parents and pupils value the nurturing relationships that staff build with them.

Leaders provide an extensive range of opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils build their confidence, resilience and independence when they attend residential visits in Years 2, 4 and 6. They learn leadership skills and apply these to the many roles that they are given. Pupils also perform in shows and attend clubs, such as archery, science and dance. Leaders check who takes part. They adjust their offer so that all pupils are included. For example, leaders create new leadership roles to match the interests of pupils with

special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, participate fully in these activities.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education. They attain well in national tests. In some areas, such as reading, attainment in these tests is above national averages. However, pupils struggle to recall important knowledge in some subjects. They do not develop the detailed knowledge and skills that leaders intend. This is because teachers do not use their checks on learning to address gaps in knowledge as effectively as they could in some subjects.

Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because leaders ensure that staff provide effective adaptations to help these pupils succeed. When there are gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills, staff usually provide timely support so that these gaps close quickly. As a result, pupils generally develop a secure grasp of these important skills.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well planned and ambitious. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, they take appropriate action to bring about improvement. For example, leaders refined the way that staff teach times tables facts so that they provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to recall these.

Leaders prioritise the basics, especially reading. Staff follow the school's phonics programme and model sounds with precision. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they know. Across school, staff provide a range of well-chosen texts for pupils to read.

Leaders make sure that teachers use effective teaching strategies. For example, teachers begin some lessons with low-stakes quizzes that challenge pupils to remember previous learning. However, teachers do not always address gaps in knowledge as early as they could.

Staff know their pupils well. They are aware of pupils' individual starting points and the barriers to learning that they face. They carefully adapt their teaching, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that these pupils access the same curriculum as their classmates, wherever possible.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff in the early years know children well. This is because leaders plan opportunities to build positive relationships with children and their families before they join the school. For example, they arrange home visits or visit existing settings and run a weekly group for children under the age of 3. This helps children to settle quickly. They feel safe and secure and behave well.

Leaders have implemented a curriculum that is broad and carefully sequenced. They make sure that staff have the training that they need to teach this well. For example, after some recent training, staff refined the way that they engage children in writing lessons. This means that children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make suitable progress from their starting points. They gain the knowledge they need to access future learning.

Staff prioritise communication and language. They use their regular interactions with children to teach new vocabulary and to help them to understand more. Classrooms are welcoming and there are many engaging resources for children to use. This helps children to maintain their interest in learning.

Leaders have designed an effective transition from early years to key stage 1. Staff share information about any gaps in knowledge that children may have. This means that children are set up to succeed when they move to Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders train staff so that they can quickly identify the barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils may face. This includes children at the beginning of their education in the early years and pupils who join the school at other times. This means that pupils get the support they need at the right time.

Leaders design support plans carefully. They work closely with other agencies so that pupils get suitable support that reduces the barriers they may face. When planning this support, leaders make sure they listen to pupils, parents and carers. As a result, staff know these pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders spend extra funding for disadvantaged pupils appropriately. For instance, funding is used to remove financial barriers that may restrict access to some of the wider opportunities that leaders provide. This means that these pupils can take part in these activities. However, leaders do not review the impact of some of their strategies to reduce barriers for vulnerable pupils with as much precision as they could. This means that leaders do not consistently make skilful adjustments to these strategies when they update them.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because they have suitable systems to check the impact of their work.

When needed, they take appropriate action to bring about improvement. This is because they are determined to achieve positive outcomes for their pupils.

Leaders engage well with parents and carers. For example, parents are invited to 'book looks' to review children's written work and talk to their teachers. Parents value these opportunities and the school's welcoming ethos.

Leaders build effective partnerships with other local schools. For example, they attend network meetings and have positive links with a local independent school. This allows leaders to learn from others and to share their expertise.

Governors are committed to their work and know the school well. They review important information, including reports about pupils' attendance and achievement. Across most areas of the school's work, they support and challenge leaders effectively. However, in some areas, governors do not have the expertise that they need to provide robust challenge to leaders. This means that some aspects of the school's work are not as well developed as they could be.

Staff morale is very high. They appreciate that leaders prioritise their wellbeing and consider their workload carefully. Staff feel valued and listened to. They describe their colleagues as a 'second family'. Staff say that this positive culture energises them and enables them to give their best to the pupils that they teach. They value the many professional learning opportunities that leaders provide. New staff feel very well supported when they join the team.

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

Pupils are excited to attend this happy school. They cherish the positive relationships that they have with each other. Pupils of all ages play well together. Older pupils take pride in caring for children in the first years of school. Pupils are safe. They trust staff to look after them and know who to go to if they need help or have any concerns. They learn how to stay safe online and in their local community.

Pupils behave well. They understand the 'golden expectations' that leaders have set. This creates a calm and orderly environment in which pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils have positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. Unkind behaviour is rare, and they trust staff to resolve issues fairly and quickly.

Pupils enjoy lessons and usually achieve well. They develop an enthusiasm for reading. This begins in the early years, where children make a positive start to school. They learn the important knowledge that they need to read words fluently and write accurately. When they need help, pupils receive support from staff, who know them well. This support means that pupils make suitable progress from their starting points. This prepares them for the next stage of their education.

Pupils attend school regularly. This is because they do not want to miss out on the many opportunities that the school provides. They attend extra-curricular clubs, enter competitions, organise fundraising events and go on visits that deepen their learning. They

value the various leadership responsibilities they are given. Pupils are committed to these roles. For example, the Junior Safety Officers encourage pupils to stay out of the sun during heatwaves while the 'hen pals' enjoy caring for the school's hens. Pupils become confident and caring because they engage well with these opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should monitor the impact of some aspects of the school's work with greater precision so that strategies are adjusted to further develop support for pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
 - Leaders should support staff to address gaps in knowledge at the earliest opportunity so that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
 - Governors should strengthen their expertise so that they can provide robust challenge across all aspects of the school's work.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rob Wellings.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place from Tuesday 14 July 2026 to Wednesday 15 July 2026.

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 senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and members of the governing body.

The 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 Chester. Its last section 48 inspection was in July 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Suzanne Dawson

Lead inspector:

John Coxhead, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Julie Barlow, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

114

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

112

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)

5.56%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.26%

Above 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

10.53%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	77%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	60%	Above

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	92%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	73%	Above

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	90%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	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	87%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	73%	Above

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24		62%	
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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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 (3 term)	2.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.0%	5.9%	Below

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)	1.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	16.2%	Below

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



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