

St Oswald's CofE Primary School

Address: Grove Road, Mollington, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 6LG

Unique reference number (URN): 149628

Inspection report: 2 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Staff warmly welcome pupils into school each day. They enjoy coming to school. Overall, pupils' attendance rates are close to the national average. Leaders take appropriate steps to address the persistent absence of some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and pupils who face challenges in their lives. Leaders hold meetings with parents and carers to consider how to support pupils to attend school regularly. Leaders' actions have had impact and reduce pupils' absence from school.

Pupils, including those with SEND, display positive attitudes to learning. They behave as leaders expect. Staff are well trained to support pupils, who have difficulty managing their emotions. This makes a real difference to pupils' wellbeing. Pupils play well together because of the careful and well-thought-out activities that leaders and staff provide. Pupils socialise well and make friends across the school. Leaders monitor any poor behaviour, including bullying, and provide purposeful support for those pupils who need it. The rare incidents of the use of inappropriate language, including name calling linked to homophobia or race, are dealt with swiftly and sensitively.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have recently worked with the trust to implement a new early years curriculum. This is well-thought-out to meet the needs of the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children are excited by the range of high-quality stories that they hear staff read to them. This develops their imagination well. Children engage in the enriching activities that staff provide. For instance, they use paint to show what a fictional wolf looks like in the trees and build structures for the wolf to live in.

Staff know how well children are progressing academically, socially and emotionally. This is because they ask children well-chosen questions and listen to what children say. Staff model the use of important words to develop their communication skills. Generally, children learn to read using phonics, form letters correctly, recognise numbers and count. However, sometimes staff do not give children with SEND enough time and support to secure their knowledge of how to read words and write letters and numbers consistently well.

Children are safe and happy in the early years. This is because staff have put in place well-established routines and make effective links with parents and carers. Overall, children are well prepared for their move into Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders in the school and across the trust have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. They have identified and prioritised the right actions for further improvement. Despite recent instability, leaders' decisions are generally made in the best interests of pupils. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum across the school and addressed pupils' persistent absence. Leaders have also taken action to improve pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables.

Leaders have identified and implemented professional learning for staff. Generally, this means that staff are knowledgeable and are suitably prepared to teach the curriculum. The school benefits from the recent support that the trust has put in place to check how well staff deliver the curriculum.

Those with responsibility for governance meet their statutory duties. They are knowledgeable and hold leaders to account for the actions that they take.

Typically, leaders have safeguarded the workload and wellbeing of staff during a time of turbulence. Staff are proud and happy to work in the school. They welcome the support they receive.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They appreciate the experience and care that is provided to their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff have carefully considered and implemented a purposeful and well-organised programme that nurtures pupils' personal development and their wellbeing.

Caring, trained staff ensure that pupils' wellbeing is carefully considered and supported well. As a result, pupils thrive emotionally. Pupils show their care for others, such as by raising money for the local hospice. They show an awareness of fundamental British values and demonstrate tolerance of others through their actions.

All pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 sit in the school parliament. They discuss pertinent questions. The ideas considered best are implemented by elected pupil councillors. Recently, the councillors introduced a new approach to rewarding pupils' achievement. Pupils are elected sports ambassadors. These leaders encourage all pupils to be fit and healthy. Pupils recently started to work with other schools in the trust to become 'climate change makers'. They take a range of thoughtful actions to help the environment, for example ensuring that lights are switched off when rooms are not in use.

All pupils represent the school in sport over the school year. After-school clubs nurture pupils' talents and skills well. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, learn to play a musical instrument and become a 'digital wizard'. Leaders track carefully which pupils take part and ensure that every pupil, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access these enriching opportunities. All pupils in key stage 2 attend a residential visit to broaden their experience. Pupils learn life skills, such as team work and resilience. They also develop their knowledge of how to mitigate risks and keep safe. However, leaders do not ensure that meaningful opportunities to bring the curriculum to life are built systematically across the school. Some activities are more ad-hoc. This means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, might miss out on these exciting opportunities to enrich their learning.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is above the national average. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils' achievement, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is variable. A small number of pupils do not develop sufficient depth of understanding in these subjects. This makes it difficult for them to recall what they have been taught and to build on prior knowledge. This means that these pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for their next stage in education.

Until recently, pupils have not been supported well enough to secure key knowledge in writing. Consequently, some pupils, particularly older pupils, do not write neatly or spell accurately. This hinders them from communicating their ideas clearly. In contrast, pupils are typically taught to read well. Due to leaders' actions, pupils' grasp of multiplication facts is improving. In some subjects, such as geography, pupils achieve well. They have a secure knowledge of different artists and they produce high-quality art work.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Leaders have recently made improvements to the content of the curriculum. This is ambitious and suitably broad. However, sometimes teachers move through the curriculum content, including the teaching of early reading, too quickly. This means that a small number of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not consistently demand high enough standards of presentation and spelling when addressing these gaps.

Leaders have begun to ensure that teachers secure the essential knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics that pupils require. This is now having some impact, especially in early years and key stage 1. While leaders have introduced a new focus on handwriting, their high expectations for presentation and spelling by pupils, are not well established across all key stage 2 classes.

Teachers have been suitably trained to deliver the curriculum. They have appropriate subject knowledge. Teachers use resources effectively. Typically, teachers build pupils' vocabulary and help them to make links across subjects. Most teachers design lessons to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. However, at times the support that they receive to reach their individual goals is not tailored well enough to their needs.

Leaders have begun to make checks on how well the curriculum is delivered. This is beginning to have impact in many classrooms and subjects.

Inclusion

Needs attention ●

Staff identify the steps that pupils need to take to learn key knowledge and skills. However, these are generally too broad. This means that the support that some pupils receive is not tailored closely enough to the areas they find most difficult. Some pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not secure the knowledge they need at the right time. As a result of recent leadership instability, leaders do not consistently make effective checks on the actions staff put in place for individual pupils with SEND. Leaders also do not consistently provide staff with enough support to identify the small steps of knowledge these pupils need to learn well.

Leaders focus on removing the emotional and social barriers that exist for pupils. They use additional funding well to make sure that those pupils who are disadvantaged have the support they need to succeed. Pupils have extra help to solve problems to refine their understanding.

Leaders ensure that pupils who face challenge in their lives have the opportunity to talk to someone if they need support. Pupils benefit from working with trained staff to deal with their emotions. This helps them to share their worries and improves their wellbeing.

Leaders use alternative provision well to support pupils needs. They check that the provision meets the needs of pupils.

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

Pupils enter school happily. This is because of the well-established routines that are in place. Pupils are rarely distracted in lessons. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and complete the tasks provided by staff. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils are safe. They trust adults to resolve any unkindness, including bullying. Pupils know who to turn to when they need help.

Pupils are kind to each other. They play well together at social times. Older pupils act as buddies. These pupils spend time helping children in the early years to develop their social skills through play.

Pupils benefit from the broad range of sports and after-school activities on offer. They are proud of their achievements in sport. The school team are delighted to be the reigning regional basketball champions. Leaders ensure that all pupils attend at least one enrichment activity over the year to broaden their experiences and nurture their talents.

Pupils' needs are identified early. Pupils who require extra guidance to manage their emotions and to improve their wellbeing receive the support that they need from trained staff, at the right time. In contrast, the support that some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive does not help them to overcome their barriers swiftly enough.

By the time they leave school, Year 6 pupils attain well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the same for those pupils who face challenge in their lives. In these subjects, pupils are prepared well for their secondary school. However, pupils' achievement across the curriculum is more varied. Some pupils do not develop well-formed handwriting. In addition, a small number of pupils do not gain secure knowledge because teachers move through the

curriculum too quickly. This hinders these pupils in learning all that they should in readiness for their next stage in their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well and that gaps in pupils' learning, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are identified and resolved so that they learn all that they should and write fluently across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that they are systematic in their approach to promoting pupils' cultural development so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take full advantage of the rich offer.
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About this inspection

The school is part of Chester Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Neil Dixon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Mason.

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 acting headteacher and other school leaders. They also spoke to representatives from the local governing body, trustees and CEO of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors held discussions with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Chester. An inspector spoke with a representative from the alternative provision that is currently used by the school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The deputy headteacher was appointed acting headteacher in January 2026. The substantive headteacher was not at work at the time of the inspection.

This is the first inspection since the school joined the multi-academy trust.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's previous section 48 inspection of schools with a religious character took place in November 2023.

The school makes use of one alternative provision, which is unregistered.

Headteacher: Danielle Beesley

Lead inspector:

Ruth Baldwin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Andy Hunt, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

109

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

150

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)

11.93%

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

3.67%

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

10.09%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	61%	Above
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	81%	73%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

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 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

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 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

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 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘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 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

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 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23		78%	

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 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

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 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

‘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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	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)	8.6%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.9%	14.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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