

Northbourne Church of England Primary School

Address: Cockcroft Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8LJ

Unique reference number (URN): 144688

Inspection report: 22 September 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 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, typically make good progress through the curriculum. They develop increasingly secure knowledge and skills across subjects. Leaders have prioritised the foundations pupils need for future learning. This is evident in pupils' work and in what they know and remember. Some variability remains, particularly in pupils' fluency in mathematics and the consistency of their handwriting.

Published outcomes present a mixed picture over time. At the end of key stage 2, attainment has generally been close to national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils have reached the expected standard in the combined measure over time. Historically, phonics outcomes have also been below national figures. More recent school information indicates improvement in phonics, early years and writing at the end of key stage 2. This reflects leaders' increased focus on securing important foundations for learning. Improvement in mathematics has been less evident. Leaders recognise this and are taking appropriate action to improve pupils' mathematical knowledge and fluency. Pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables is improving.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is a strength of the school and has remained above the national figure over time. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. They arrive on time and settle quickly to learning. Leaders have an accurate understanding of attendance across the school. They analyse information carefully and identify pupils who need additional support. Leaders understand the barriers that affect the attendance of a small number of pupils. They act quickly and work closely with families and external agencies where appropriate. This targeted support helps pupils to attend more regularly.

Pupils behave well. Leaders set very high expectations for behaviour and pupils understand these clearly. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other and for adults. Relationships are positive and inclusive. Lessons are calm and disruption to learning is rare. Pupils' attitudes to learning are typically positive. They engage well and respond positively to adults. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils lose focus for short periods. Staff address this quickly. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying is rare. They trust adults to listen to their concerns and deal with any incidents promptly. Leaders support pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour effectively. Personalised approaches and appropriate adaptations help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to meet the school's high expectations and participate successfully in school life.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching. They have established an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. It identifies the important knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and sequences these appropriately. The 2-year curriculum cycle supports progression in mixed-age classes. Pupils typically build securely

on what they have learned before. Reading is a priority. Staff teach phonics consistently and help most pupils become confident readers. Leaders provide professional development that strengthens practice.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain learning clearly. They use subject-specific vocabulary effectively. Consistent approaches to teaching and retrieval help pupils remember important knowledge over time. Teachers typically make appropriate adaptations so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, participate successfully in learning. Pupils generally produce work of an appropriate quality and take pride in their learning.

Teachers use assessment to identify what pupils know and remember. They often use questioning effectively to check learning. However, they do not always check all pupils' understanding precisely enough or address misconceptions quickly. As a result, some errors persist over time. This includes handwriting and letter formation, where teachers do not consistently reinforce expectations.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a calm and inclusive early years provision. They understand its strengths and what needs to improve. Their work has strengthened the curriculum and learning environment. Leaders ensure that children feel safe and well cared for. They meet statutory requirements. There are some opportunities to strengthen practice further so that agreed procedures consistently reflect the school's policies. Although it is early in the school year, children have settled quickly and respond positively to established routines. In Nursery, children engage well with learning across the environment. They play and learn happily together and are developing their independence, confidence and social skills.

The curriculum is well organised across all areas of learning. Leaders give appropriate priority to communication and language, reading, writing and mathematics. Staff teach phonics systematically from an early stage. Children, including those who face barriers to learning or wellbeing, develop important knowledge and skills from their different starting points.

Staff know the children well. They teach focused activities effectively and use assessment, in these sessions, appropriately to identify what children need to learn next. Adults interact warmly with children. However, they do not consistently maximise opportunities across the setting for children to rehearse and extend their language, deepen their thinking and address misconceptions.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an inclusive, child-centred culture. They typically identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately and support them effectively. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers wherever appropriate. Leaders listen carefully to pupils, parents and teachers, when assessing needs and planning support. They work constructively with families and external agencies.

Teachers know pupils well. High-quality teaching and appropriate adjustments help to reduce barriers to learning. Pupils with SEND take part successfully in learning. Leaders provide regular professional development and check the quality of inclusive practice. Additional adults generally support pupils effectively.

Leaders understand the different barriers pupils may face, including disadvantaged pupils. They provide targeted academic, behavioural and pastoral support. Leaders identify pupils' individual needs well. Leaders are refining how precisely they distinguish between pupils' needs that can be met through high-quality teaching and those that require additional SEND provision. They are also sharpening their evaluation of the support provided for pupils with SEND.

The Phoenix provision supports pupils with more complex needs effectively. Pupils are happy, settled and engaged in appropriately adapted learning. Flexible arrangements help pupils to participate in mainstream learning where appropriate.

The pupil premium strategy is well considered. It supports pupils' wider development effectively. Leaders' renewed focus on disadvantaged pupils is helping to improve their achievement across the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders put pupils first. They understand the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve. They have identified the right priorities and are taking purposeful action. This is improving important areas of the school's work, including early reading, writing, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the wider curriculum. However, some aspects of the school's work, particularly in mathematics, are still being refined.

Leaders invest in developing staff expertise. They provide regular professional development that links closely to the school's priorities. Staff value these opportunities and say that training helps them improve their practice. Leaders also consider staff workload and wellbeing carefully. Staff feel valued, respected and well supported.

Leaders have built positive relationships with parents and the wider community. Parents typically describe the school as caring and nurturing. They recognise the support that pupils receive, particularly those with SEND or who need additional pastoral support. Parents say that pupils are happy and feel safe.

Governors and trustees understand their statutory responsibilities and the school's priorities. They have strengthened their knowledge through training, visits and discussions with leaders. They support and challenge leaders and act in pupils' best interests. The trust supports the school's improvement work. It provides leaders and staff with additional expertise and opportunities to work with other schools. This helps leaders strengthen aspects of the school's provision.

Leaders have a clear and thoughtful approach to pupils' personal development. They understand the needs of pupils and make sure that the curriculum and pastoral support contribute positively to their wider development. Pupils become confident, respectful and considerate of others. They develop a strong sense of belonging and know that adults will support them when they need help.

The personal, social and health education curriculum, including relationships education, builds pupils' knowledge appropriately over time. Pupils learn about positive relationships and how to manage their emotions. They learn how to make healthy choices and keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders respond sensitively when pupils experience difficulties with their wellbeing. They seek specialist support when needed. This helps pupils manage challenges and remain engaged in school life.

Pupils learn to reflect on important issues, consider different viewpoints and understand the world around them. Assemblies and classroom discussions support this well. Pupils understand the importance of equality and show respect for difference through their actions. Pupils cannot readily identify or explain fundamental British values. However, they demonstrate many of these values through the way they behave and treat others. Pupils demonstrate respect for different faiths and beliefs, although their knowledge and understanding of these could be further developed.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from experiences beyond the classroom. They actively remove barriers to participation, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, pupils take part in clubs, trips, residential and wider opportunities. Experiences such as performing at Dorchester Abbey broaden pupils' horizons and build confidence. Pupils also take on responsibilities and support charitable causes. These experiences help pupils contribute positively to their community and prepare well for their next steps.

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

Northbourne Church of England Primary School is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive school. Its vision, 'Nurturing excellence', reflects the care and ambition that pupils experience. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy coming each day. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive promptly.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Adults know pupils well and give them help when they need it. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils behave well. They understand what adults expect of them and help to make the school a calm and positive place to learn. Pupils get along well in lessons and at social times. Bullying is rare. Pupils know who to speak to if they have a worry. They trust adults to listen and take action.

Pupils enjoy learning and talk positively about what they learn. Children in the early years usually make a positive start to school. Across the school, pupils build their knowledge and generally achieve well. However, teachers do not always spot or address pupils'

misunderstandings quickly enough. As a result, some pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, develop gaps in important knowledge.

Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities the school provides. Clubs, visits and residential trips help them become more confident and independent. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel included in school life. Older pupils feel well prepared for their next stage of education. Pupils also value opportunities to take responsibility. For example, school council members are proud to represent other pupils. Pupils feel that adults listen to their views and that they can make a difference to school life.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve the consistent use of assessment so that pupils' understanding and misconceptions are identified precisely and teaching responds effectively to deepen pupils' learning.
 - Leaders should further strengthen how they review pupils' continuing need for special educational and/or disabilities provision and monitor their progress over time, so that provision remains closely matched to their current needs.
 - In the early years, leaders should ensure that staff maximise opportunities for children's learning through consistently high-quality interactions across all areas of provision.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools 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), Sharon Mullins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kathy Winrow.

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

The inspection took place on 22 September 2026 and 23 September 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 the headteacher and other school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with representatives from the local governing body, trustees, other leaders within the trust and the CEO from the trust.

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 Oxford. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in December 2024.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Lorraine Greco, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Trudi Sammons, Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Johnson, His Majesty's 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

343

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: 268

School capacity

315

Close to 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)

15.87%

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: 26.5%

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

3.50%

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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.08%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	5%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	10%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	0%	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	32%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	40%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	17%	60%	Below

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	26%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	30%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	58%	Below

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	21%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	20%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	59%	Below

‘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	5%	68%	-62 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	10%	67%	-57 pp
2022/23 (final)	0%	66%	-66 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	32%	80%	-48 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	40%	80%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	17%	78%	-62 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	26%	78%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	30%	78%	-48 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	77%	-44 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	21%	80%	-59 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	20%	79%	-59 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp

‘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)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	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)	7.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	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.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



© Crown copyright