

Padbury Church of England School

Address: Main Road, Padbury, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 2AP

Unique reference number (URN): 145216

Inspection report: 21 April 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders track pupils' progress across subjects carefully and respond swiftly when additional support is needed. This timely and targeted approach ensures that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make clear progress from their starting points and achieve well.

As a result, pupils achieve highly at the school and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Outcomes in the core subjects are consistently positive and, over time, results in national assessments are typically well above national averages. In 2025, all Year 1 pupils passed the phonics screening check. Pupils benefit from the school's recently introduced handwriting scheme, particularly younger pupils who have had more time to embed these skills.

Pupils also develop secure knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. A clear focus on vocabulary enables pupils to use subject-specific language confidently when explaining their learning, for example in history and science. This supports pupils to recall prior learning accurately and to make meaningful connections across subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is a sustained strength of the school. Attendance is consistently above national averages and has exceeded pre-COVID pandemic levels. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is significantly lower than average. These outcomes reflect a well-established culture that promotes the importance of regular attendance. Leaders make effective use of attendance data to monitor individual pupils and identify emerging concerns. They act swiftly when issues arise. Leaders' secure understanding of pupils' individual circumstances enables them to take a flexible and supportive approach. They work closely with families and external partners, where needed, to remove barriers to regular attendance.

The school promotes a respectful and inclusive environment where pupils understand and meet leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are polite, confident and keen to engage with visitors. Playtimes are calm and positive, with pupils of different ages including others naturally. In lessons, pupils are motivated to learn and work collaboratively. Bullying and serious incidents are rare. When incidents do occur, they are addressed promptly and reviewed appropriately. Staff understand pupils' emotional and behavioural needs and support them sensitively, particularly at times of transition. Where necessary, leaders work with external agencies to strengthen this support.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear and coherent vision for pupils' personal development, shaped around their ambition to develop each pupil as a 'Padbury Child'. This vision is realised through a well-planned and responsive personal development and wellbeing programme that reflects pupils' needs and makes the most of opportunities available in the local community.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully sequenced and age-appropriate. Pupils develop a secure understanding of important topics such as healthy relationships, supporting their own emotional wellbeing and diversity. They show increasing confidence in recognising risks and know how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. Leaders also respond effectively to emerging issues through assemblies, workshops and targeted interventions. For example, a recent visit from the local police community support officer strengthened pupils' understanding of online safety.

Both the curriculum and wider enrichment activities support pupils to develop their social skills, empathy and respect for others. Pupils learn about different cultures and backgrounds. Equality and inclusion are promoted effectively, including a clear understanding of protected characteristics. As a result, pupils demonstrate respectful attitudes and an appreciation of diversity in modern Britain.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Staff know pupils well and provide timely and compassionate support when needed. This contributes positively to pupils' wellbeing, behaviour and attendance. Leaders carefully monitor pupils' experiences, including disadvantaged pupils, and remove barriers so all pupils can take part fully. Opportunities for public speaking, such as the bi-annual speech cup, and taking on leadership roles help pupils develop confidence and contribute positively to school life.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values and can explain how these apply in their everyday lives. For example, pupils discuss which values are most important within the school community and agree that the rule of law, reflected in school rules, helps to keep everyone safe.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school provides a broad, balanced and well-sequenced curriculum that supports pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills. There is a clear emphasis on developing core skills, with early reading and mathematics taught effectively. Pupils also benefit from learning that extends beyond the classroom. For example, outdoor learning sessions in a nearby wooded area enable pupils to develop practical skills, such as whittling, sawing and safely starting fires, which enrich their learning experiences.

Staff generally demonstrate secure subject knowledge and present learning clearly. Teachers promote collaboration and active participation. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, explore ideas and ask thoughtful questions. In a Year 3 and Year 4 history lesson, pupils make predictions as they examine and discuss Anglo Saxon artefacts. Teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities, and adapt activities so that all pupils can access the curriculum.

Supported by trust oversight, leaders have a secure understanding of the curriculum and use this effectively to inform decisions about its delivery. This includes identifying staff training needs and organising teaching in mixed-age classes. However, curriculum monitoring at school level is not yet fully systematic or precise. As a result, leaders do not

consistently identify clear next steps for improvement or evaluate how well teaching meets the needs of all pupils.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years environment is calm, welcoming and well organised, which helps children feel safe and settled. Clear routines support positive behaviour and help children learn to take turns and follow expectations. This prepares them well for the move into Year 1.

Parents and carers speak positively about the early years induction process, which helps children settle quickly when they join the class. Staff get to know each child well, including their interests and any additional needs. In the learning environment, staff generally check what children can already do and consider what they need to learn next, so activities are planned carefully to meet children's needs and interests.

All groups of children make secure progress across different areas of learning. They develop confidence, independence and positive attitudes towards learning. Staff support children effectively to build early communication, language and number skills through well-planned activities and clear daily routines. Children are encouraged to explore, share their ideas and take part in play that develops both their social skills and their curiosity.

Leaders give careful attention to the early years. They monitor provision closely and take action where needed to ensure children continue to receive a high-quality experience.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Inclusion is a clear priority for leaders. They have appropriate strategies in place to identify and support pupils' learning and wellbeing needs. Staff use early assessment information alongside careful observation to identify barriers to learning as soon as possible. This enables leaders to put timely and targeted support in place.

Staff have benefited from extensive training in recent years. This has strengthened their confidence and expertise in meeting a wide range of needs, including those of the increased number of pupils with education, health and care plans. Leaders work closely with a range of external professionals who provide direct support for pupils, including those who are known, or were previously known, to social care. These specialists also contribute to developing staff knowledge through regular training. Leaders maintain appropriate oversight of pupils who attend alternative provision and ensure that their safety and wellbeing remain a priority.

Leaders use their pupil premium strategy effectively to support eligible pupils. They are continuing to refine their systems so that they can account more precisely for the costs and impact of the support provided. Leaders regularly review the progress of key groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, monitoring is less robust for some pupils who face barriers to learning or wellbeing but are currently achieving expected outcomes.

Leaders are focused on continuous improvement. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development and take appropriate action to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders are attentive to staff wellbeing and workload, which helps staff feel valued, supported and treated fairly. Staff appreciate the careful and proactive way leaders manage challenging periods, ensuring continuity and stability for pupils.

Leaders engage with evidence-informed approaches when developing practice. Professional development is closely aligned with the school's future development plan and is tailored to meet pupils' needs, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders also work beyond the school, engaging in professional networks and partnerships that strengthen practice and support ongoing improvement.

The trust plays an active and effective role in both supporting and holding the school to account. Trust leaders carry out regular reviews, which give them a secure understanding of how well the school is performing. Leaders value the trust's guidance and support.

Governance is committed and informed. Governors and trustees understand their roles and give careful attention to safeguarding and staff wellbeing. Local governors undertake a range of activities to triangulate the information provided by leaders and offer challenge. While this challenge is not always fully evident in the minutes of meetings, the trust is taking steps to strengthen this further. Clear reporting systems support effective communication between local governors, trustees and the central trust team.

Parents and carers speak positively about the school's caring and nurturing environment. They value the supportive relationships within the school community, which help pupils to feel happy and secure and to be successful in their learning.

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

Pupils feel celebrated, cared for and known well at Padbury Church of England Primary School. They enjoy being part of a small school community where everyone knows each other. On the playground and in the dining hall, pupils from different classes play and socialise harmoniously. Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any worries or concerns.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what it means to be a 'Padbury Child'. They believe that the values they develop, including loving kindness, respect and courage, will remain with them as they move on to secondary school. Pupils explain that everyone in the school community actively strives to live out these values and to let their own light shine. They take pride in sharing their achievements, both in school and beyond. Pupils record their out-of-school successes in the 'be the best you can be' book and enjoy celebrating these with their wider school community. They are also encouraged to recognise and celebrate the achievements of others.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility. In the early years, children take pride in helping to look after resources and outdoor areas. As pupils move through the

school, this develops into their participation in leadership groups, such as the Eco and School Councils. Pupils also carry out responsibilities as they care for the school's plot at the community allotment. Each class contributes to the annual Padbury Produce Show, with Sycamore class's impressive pumpkins crowned as the winners in 2025.

Attendance is high at the school, which supports pupils' consistently high achievement. Pupils find their learning enjoyable and engaging. Teachers support pupils effectively and provide work that is well matched to their needs. Pupils enjoy practical learning, such as science investigations into how seeds grow. Older pupils remember enrichment experiences, including a visit to the NASA space centre, which help broaden their aspirations and knowledge.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop their systems to check that the curriculum is implemented in line with their intentions, as well as precisely identifying next steps for further development.
 - Leaders should strengthen how they evaluate the impact of provision for all groups of pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including those who achieve well.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks 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), Sulina Piesse, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Mill.

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 and other school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors met with the CEO, the director of education and the chief of governance of the trust. The inspection team also spoke with members of the local governing body and 2 trustees during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the diocese and with staff, pupils, 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 school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in January 2019.

The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Lead inspector:

Katie Hancock, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Sally Snooks, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

106

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)

9.43%

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

3.77%

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

21.70%

Well above 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	89%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	94%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	93%	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	98%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	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	89%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	94%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
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	95%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	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	S	46%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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	S	62%	S
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	S	59%	S
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	S	60%	S
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	S	68%	S
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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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	S	78%	S
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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

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 (2 term)	3.2%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.0%	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 (2 term)	3.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	2.2%	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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