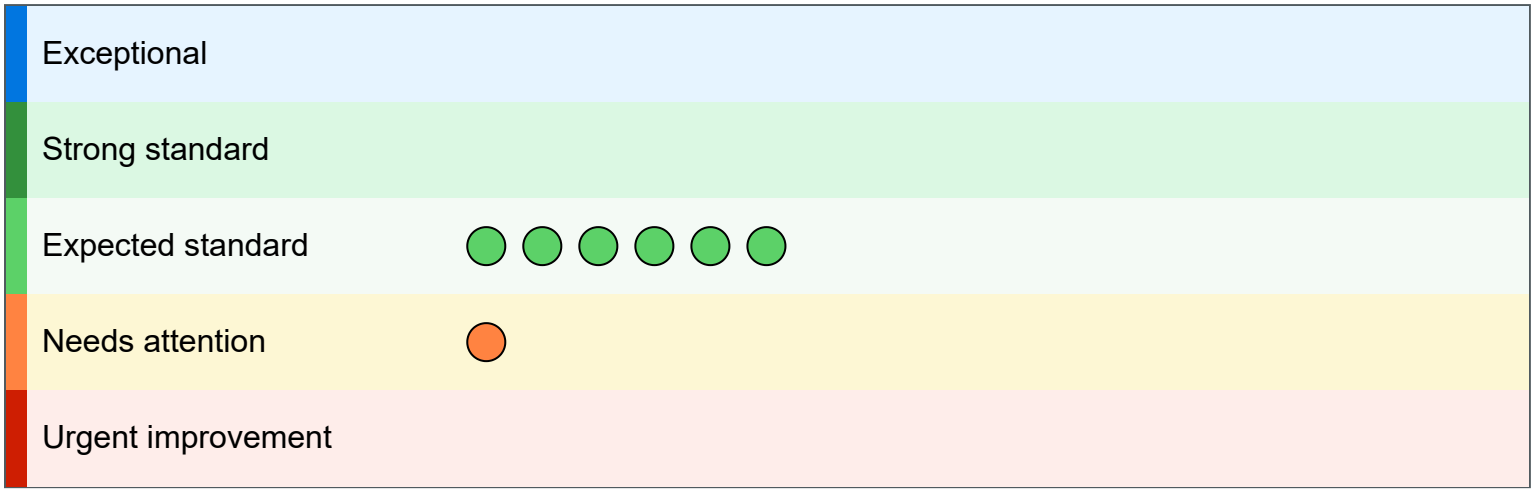
# St Philip's Catholic Primary School

**Address:** Messenger Road, Smethwick, West Midlands, B66 3DU

**Unique reference number (URN):** 141929

# Inspection report: 22 September 2026




## 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**

Published outcomes show that, separately, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has typically been close to the national average, although the proportion reaching the expected standard across all 3 subjects combined has in the past been lower. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils compare positively with those of disadvantaged pupils nationally. Their 3-year outcomes are close to the national average in writing, mathematics and the combined measure, and above the national average in reading.

Pupils currently in the school are benefiting from ongoing improvements. This is evident in pupils' work and in what they know and can do. For example, specific work in mathematics and early reading has improved outcomes in the multiplication tables check in Year 4 and phonics screening check in Year 1.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils remember important facts and information. For example, pupils in Year 4 draw confidently on previous learning when discussing the components needed to build an electrical circuit in science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with the highest levels of need.

## Attendance and behaviour

**Expected standard**

Leaders prioritise attendance. They use careful analysis to identify barriers to attendance and work constructively with families to improve it. Published information shows that overall absence has been close to the national average over time. Although persistent absence has previously been higher than the national average, leaders' actions have successfully reduced the proportion of pupils who miss too much school. This has been particularly successful for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' behaviour and readiness for learning through introducing the 'St Philip's way'. They have taken careful account of pupils' needs and explicitly teach and model their high expectations. Strategies such as the 'chair check' are understood and consistently applied. This means that no learning time is lost. Pupils show impeccable manners at every point in the school day. They warmly welcome visitors as they arrive in school or as they see them during the school day. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils say that they are 'from all around the world'. They value this and show tolerance and respect for others.

## Curriculum and teaching

**Expected standard**

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum and that it is generally taught well. It is sequenced so that pupils build on their learning and make links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 confidently discuss how the jungle is used for harvesting important medicines when learning about the Mayan civilisation.

Leaders' recent work is having a positive impact on teaching and learning in some subjects. Teachers use effective strategies to adapt the curriculum so that all pupils can access it. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Teachers present learning clearly and establish positive classroom environments where pupils are keen to learn. Phonics is taught consistently by well-trained staff.

Leaders have introduced strategies to identify when pupils have gaps in key skills such as writing, and to deepen pupils' understanding in subjects such as science. Sometimes, teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' gaps in learning to plan subsequent teaching. At other times, activities to develop pupils' learning at the end of a topic are not as effective as they could be.

## Inclusion

**Expected standard**

This is a school where everybody is fully included. The school's mission is at the heart of a culture in which every pupil is valued and respected. Pupils develop a strong sense of belonging to the school.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families very well. They work with care and determination to do the best they can for every pupil. Leaders and staff quickly identify barriers and needs and use this information to understand the best way to support pupils. They work closely with parents, carers and a range of external specialists. Pupils, including those known or previously known to social care and those facing other challenges, benefit from this carefully thought-out approach.

Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully. For example, they identify interventions for disadvantaged pupils who need extra support when learning to read. The curriculum is effectively adapted, where needed, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who require high levels of support access a bespoke curriculum and personalised strategies. Staff receive relevant and specific training to help them do this.

## Leadership and governance

**Expected standard**

Leaders at all levels share the same vision and ambition for all pupils. Compassion sits at the heart of their decisions. Trustees and the local governing body know what their roles and responsibilities are. They are committed to the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Leaders have made changes since the last inspection that are having a positive impact, including improvements to pupils' behaviour. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. However, there is scope for leaders to be more precise in how they identify and address some aspects of the school's work. In some areas, actions are not targeted as precisely as they could be, and systems for checking their impact could be sharper. This includes aspects of safeguarding. Greater precision in these areas would help leaders to evaluate the impact of their work more closely.

Leaders have developed trusting, constructive relationships with parents and carers. Families welcome the school's nurturing approach and the positive relationships between

home and school. Staff value the support and training they receive and speak positively about leaders' consideration of workload and wellbeing. Professional development is linked to improvement areas, and leaders create opportunities for staff to develop knowledge and skills, for example by visiting other schools and collaborating with colleagues.

### Personal development and wellbeing

**Expected standard**

Leaders know the local community very well and use this knowledge to carefully shape the personal development and wellbeing offer. The school's mission underpins every aspect of school life. It helps pupils to treat others with love, kindness and respect. Pupils learn to be considerate and confident members of the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, particularly online. They know about, for example, making positive choices in the face of peer pressure in the community. Pupils know what to do if something worries them. They know that there are trusted adults in school who will help.

Pupils value the diversity within their school and the wider community. They learn about, and respect, different faiths and cultures. They learn about democracy, for example, by having their voices heard through voting for aspects of school life. In these ways, pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to broaden their knowledge of themselves and the world. From 'playground buddies' to 'Mini Vinnies', they take on roles and responsibilities that help them to develop character and to care for others. Many pupils take part in clubs and visits, which develop confidence and spark talents and interests. Effective pastoral support helps pupils overcome barriers to wellbeing and participation. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those who need additional support are included.

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## Needs attention

### Early years

**Needs attention**

Leaders prioritise the early years and have recently reviewed the curriculum to focus more clearly on preparing children for their next stages. However, their intentions are not consistently realised. The quality of teaching in the early years is variable. When staff are clear about children's starting points and the intended learning, activities support learning more effectively. However, some activities do not have a clear learning focus. Not all staff know precisely enough what children can already do and what they need to learn next. This means that some learning opportunities are missed. It also means that staff cannot consistently promote and extend children's learning and language through effective interactions. As a result of these inconsistencies, children are not as prepared as they could be for Year 1.

However, there are foundations to build on. Leaders and staff swiftly identify potential barriers to learning and wellbeing and put in effective support. Phonics is generally taught

well. Leaders have focused on ensuring children develop appropriate pencil grip and master early letter and number formation. Children quickly learn routines and follow them well. Staff build caring relationships with children and their families. This helps children to settle quickly.

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

St Philip’s Catholic Primary School is a place full of warm smiles, good manners and genuine love for one another. Staff know pupils and their families well. This makes pupils feel safe and well cared for. Everyone is welcomed and belongs. This is a school at the heart of the diverse community it serves. Pupils take pride in their school and are eager to share it with visitors.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are proud of their work. Although pupils' attainment in national tests has been lower in the past, pupils are benefiting from recent improvements to teaching and learning, including in mathematics.

Pupils behave very well. They have impeccable manners, which are consistently modelled for them by leaders and staff. Pupils learn tolerance and say that bullying is rare. They are confident that if it happens, their teachers will help. Pastoral support is an important and effective part of daily school life. It wraps around pupils and their families and enables pupils to overcome barriers to learning and wellbeing. Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work hard with families and carers so that pupils can attend school every day. Leaders have successfully reduced the number of pupils who miss too much time from school.

A range of activities and opportunities enrich pupils’ experience of school life. Pupils are incredibly proud to take on important roles in school, such as playground buddies. They learn how to keep themselves safe, especially online. Pupils learn about each other’s cultures and languages through specially planned days, trips and visitors. Pupils live out the school's values and Catholic ethos.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should develop staff’s expertise in the early years so that they can design learning activities based on children’s starting points, which develop children’s depth of knowledge and consistently maximise opportunities to extend language and vocabulary through high-quality interactions.
- Leaders at all levels should sharpen their checking and evaluation of some aspects of the school’s work, including safeguarding, so that they can identify priorities accurately and take effective action to further improve pupils' achievement and wellbeing.
- Leaders should continue to work closely with families to secure high attendance for all pupils.

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## About this inspection

This school is part of Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company, which means that other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Suzanne Horan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanna Griffin.

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 school leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. They also held discussions with the chair and a representative of the local governing body, the CEO, trust leaders and a representative from the diocese.

Inspectors considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2025.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Principal : Carmel Hinton

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**Lead inspector:**
Rachel Henrick, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**
Donna OToole, Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood, 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 22 September 2026

## School and pupil context

**Total pupils**

## 209
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**

## 210
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)**

## 37.57%
Above 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**

## 4.31%
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**

## 11.00%
Below average

**What does this mean?**

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

National average: 15%

**Location deprivation**

## Well above 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** | 49% | 61% | Below |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 50% | 62% | Below |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 53% | 61% | Close to average |

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2022/23 (final)** | 45% | 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** | 72% | 74% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 80% | 75% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 73% | 74% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 62% | 73% | Below |

### 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** | 69% | 72% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 67% | 72% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 70% | 72% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 69% | 71% | Close to average |

### 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** | 67% | 73% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 73% | 74% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 67% | 73% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 62% | 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** | 42% | 46% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 50% | 47% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 43% | 46% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 35% | 44% | Close to average |

### 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** | 70% | 62% | Above |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 100% | 63% | Above |

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2023/24 (final)** | 64% | 62% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 53% | 60% | Close to average |

### 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** | 65% | 59% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 67% | 59% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 64% | 58% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 65% | 58% | Close to average |

### 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** | 58% | 60% | Close to average |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 67% | 61% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 50% | 59% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 59% | 59% | Close to average |

## 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** | 42% | 68% | -26 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 50% | 69% | -19 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 43% | 67% | -25 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 35% | 66% | -31 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** | 70% | 80% | -10 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 100% | 81% | 19 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 64% | 80% | -15 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 53% | 78% | -25 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** | 65% | 78% | -13 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 67% | 78% | -12 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 64% | 78% | -13 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 65% | 77% | -13 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** | 58% | 80% | -22 pp |
| **2024/25 (final)** | 67% | 81% | -14 pp |
| **2023/24 (final)** | 50% | 79% | -29 pp |
| **2022/23 (final)** | 59% | 79% | -20 pp |

## 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)** | 5.4% | 5.2% | Close to average |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 6.1% | 5.5% | Close to average |
| **2022/23 (3 term)** | 6.5% | 5.9% | Close to average |

**Persistent absence**

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

| Year | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2024/25 (3 term)** | 17.4% | 13.0% | Above |
| **2023/24 (3 term)** | 20.7% | 14.6% | Above |
| **2022/23 (3 term)** | 18.6% | 16.2% | Close to average |

## 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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