

Christ Church Academy

Address: Old Road, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 8JD

Unique reference number (URN): 136961

Inspection report: 14 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Over time, pupils' attendance is consistently high, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff celebrate and reward high attendance. If a pupil does miss too much school, leaders work closely with the pupil, parents and carers to remove any barriers to attendance that they may have. Leaders are passionate about supporting pupils to understand the value of regular attendance, including being on time. As a result, the number of pupils who are regularly late has reduced significantly because of leaders' actions.

Behaviour in classrooms and on the playground is excellent. Pupils fully engage in their learning and lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils are extremely polite and courteous. They hold doors open for each other and greet people warmly in the corridors. Pupils agree that bullying is rare and if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of differences. They say racism and any form of harassment does not happen at the school. Older pupils take great pride in the roles and responsibilities they have and act as excellent role models to the younger pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and are taught how to keep safe, including online and in the local community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a coherent programme of personal development that has been specifically written for this school. It has clear end points and enables pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils develop a secure and detailed knowledge that helps to build their character and independence. Consequently, pupils leave the school as well-rounded individuals, ready to play a positive role in modern Britain.

Pupils learn appropriate relationships and sex education that develops pupils' knowledge in an age-appropriate way. Parents and carers are fully informed about this aspect of the school's work. Pupils develop their understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain. Pupils understand equality and fairness. They are welcoming to all, tolerant and embrace difference.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop talents and interests through a vast number of clubs, music lessons, leadership roles, trips and visits. Leaders specifically work with disadvantaged pupils to remove barriers so they can participate. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities significantly benefit from this offer.

The school knows the families and pupils well, and this means that staff understand who might need additional pastoral guidance. The school provides highly effective and individualised pastoral help to families and pupils. Relationships with families are built on trust and support. As a result, parents are confident to ask for help when needed.

All pupils, including those in key stage 2, benefit from high-quality and impartial careers education and guidance. Leaders have developed a comprehensive, sequenced careers

curriculum, which is integrated into the personal development programme. Leaders work with skill and sensitivity to engage with pupils who may be at risk of not staying in education. These pupils access bespoke activities to give them the confidence and inspiration to want to succeed.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders carefully baseline pupils when they arrive at the school. They use this information to plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils. After two years, at the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve standards that are generally in line with their peers nationally. Over the past few years, outcomes in reading and writing have improved and this is reflected in pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders are not complacent and know there is more to do to further secure improvements in the outcomes of these tests, including in mathematics.

During their time in school, pupils learn and progress through the curriculum well. Pupils talk confidently about their learning. They appreciate the help and support they receive from staff to help them to apply their knowledge across curriculum subjects. For example, some staff teach both history and English. This is a deliberate decision by leaders to ensure that pupils have more opportunity to apply their writing skills in other subjects.

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 8, they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. They understand the strengths and the areas to develop. Staff have secure subject knowledge, including those who may be teaching out of their main area of expertise. Staff generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils typically rise to these expectations. However, across some subjects, the quality of pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation is variable.

Leaders ensure that staff are skilled at designing learning that builds over time towards clear end points. Teaching activities are well considered and carefully matched to the learning. Teachers make effective adjustments for pupils who have barriers to their learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff support pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read through effective phonics teaching. They also develop pupils' vocabulary and oracy well. As a result, pupils are articulate and are able to express themselves confidently. Teachers ensure that pupils know and use subject-specific vocabulary with fluency and confidence.

Teachers maintain a clear overview of how well the pupils are learning. Generally, the school develops pupils' knowledge well. However, at times, checks on learning do not identify and

address misconceptions. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that could be addressed quicker.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

All pupils at Christ Church Academy are fully included in all aspects of school life. Leaders have created an inclusive culture through ensuring pupils feel they belong, feel loved and feel safe. From the moment they arrive, staff quickly get to know the pupils' strengths. Staff identify any needs pupils have and any gaps in their learning that they may have. Effective and timely support is put in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained to support pupils to overcome any barriers to their learning that they have. Targets from pupils' education, health and care plans are woven seamlessly into the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND settle quickly and learn well. At times, however, some staff do not identify learning gaps in foundational knowledge consistently enough for other disadvantaged pupils. Interventions are effective in reducing barriers to learning and supporting pupils to catch up. Leaders work effectively with professionals and external agencies to reduce barriers to pupils' learning.

Leaders make decisions about the use of additional funds based on high-quality research and evidence. They carefully monitor the impact of any support and make changes to the provision when necessary.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, trustees and governors are passionate about ensuring the success of this middle school. They understand the pressures and challenges that the school faces but have an ambitious vision for the school and its future. Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. All decisions that leaders make put the pupils at the centre. For example, they have taken effective action to increase pupils' success in reading.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable and undertake their roles and responsibilities well. They hold leaders to account effectively. They ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties, for example in safeguarding pupils. They offer strong challenge to the school and the trust.

Leaders have instilled high expectations across the school. The majority of staff share these expectations. Staff describe the school as a positive and supportive team. Leaders actively seek the views of staff and take positive actions to support workload and wellbeing. Staff receive regular opportunities for professional learning. Staff are well trained in understanding how to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school builds constructive relationships with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need to thrive. As a result, parents and carers are typically positive about the school and its work.

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

Pupils love attending this welcoming school. As a result, their attendance is a strength and consistently high over time. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite and respectful. They forge warm and respectful relationships across the school community, both with other pupils, staff and the school dog, Minnie. Older pupils show care and guidance to the younger pupils and act as mentors and role models. Pupils thrive in the many leadership roles they carry out. From 'Prefect' to 'Form Captain', and 'Hope Ambassador' to 'Super Six leader', the pupils agree that these roles help them to make a positive contribution to the school.

Over their time in school, pupils achieve well. Pupils take their end of key stage 2 tests after being at the school for five terms. In the main, pupils achieve close to other pupils nationally. However, these tests do not always reflect the extent and depth of knowledge that pupils learn over the four years at the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well through their learning. They are ably supported by skilled adults to ensure that learning is well matched to the needs of the pupils. Some pupils, however, do not grasp learning as quickly as they could because some staff do not consistently address gaps in foundational knowledge.

Pupils feel safe and secure in the school. They benefit from high-quality experiences and learning that teaches them how to be safe and confident individuals. For example, all pupils have road safety sessions to help in the transition of walking to school in Year 5.

Pupils benefit from the school's comprehensive wider curriculum offer. All pupils benefit from very well-considered and bespoke careers guidance. This helps pupils to develop an in-depth understanding about next steps and the choices available to them.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff check how well pupils have learned new knowledge and identify and address any misconceptions quickly so as to build pupils' foundational knowledge over time.
- Leaders should ensure that all staff share leaders' high expectations of pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation so that the quality of work in books is consistent across all subjects and year groups.

About this inspection

This school is part of The Key Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Christopher Wright, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julie Hope.

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, teachers, trust leaders, trustees and school governors during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Principal: Tara Thorn

Lead inspector:

Eve Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:


Philip Hamilton, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Bassett, Ofsted Inspector

Corinne Biddell, His Majesty's 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

545

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: 1,067

School capacity

566

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

20.18%

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: 28.9%

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

3.12%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.46%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	51%	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 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	73%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average

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	31%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	36%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	21%	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	51%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	61%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	39%	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	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	61%	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	45%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	44%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43%	59%	Below

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	31%	68%	-37 pp
2024/25 (final)	36%	69%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	67%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	21%	66%	-45 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	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	61%	81%	-20 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	80%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	39%	78%	-39 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	53%	78%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	78%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	78%	-33 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	61%	77%	-17 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	45%	80%	-35 pp
2024/25 (revised)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	48%	79%	-31 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	79%	-36 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 (2 term)	5.1%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	9.0%	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)	12.2%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	14.1%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.0%	26.5%	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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