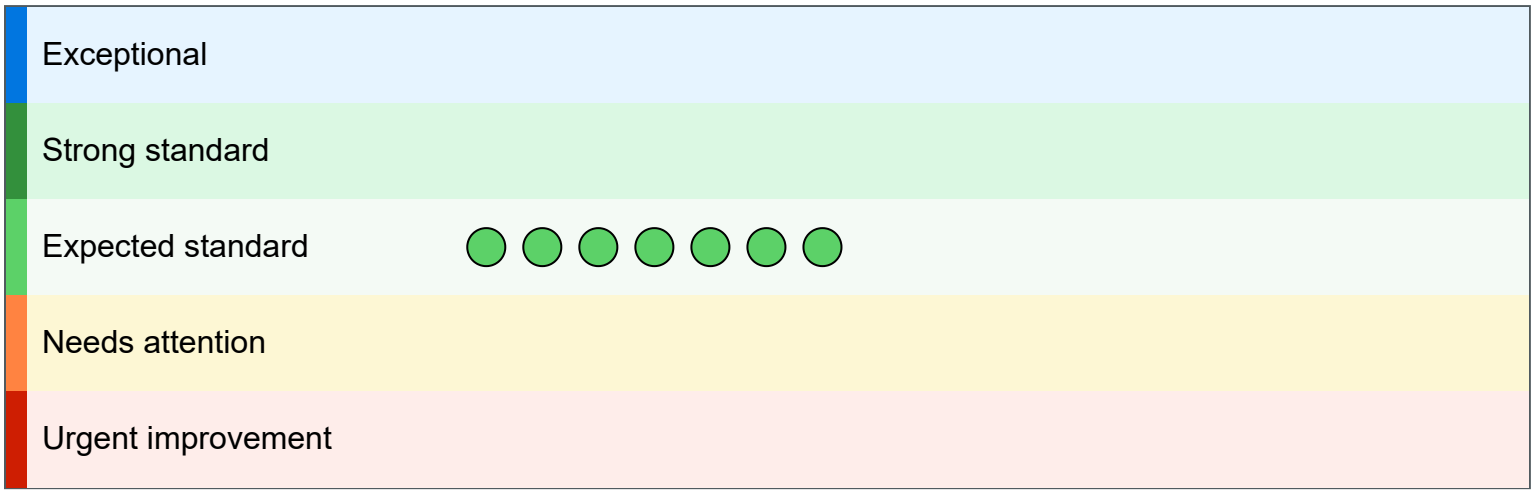
Freeland Church of England Primary School

Address: Parklands, Freeland, Freeland Primary School, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 8HX

Unique reference number (URN): 140916

Inspection report: 15 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

Overall, pupils achieve well. They are ready for the next stages in their education. This is reflected in outcomes over time in the Year 1 phonics check and key stage 2 national tests. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well through the curriculum from their starting points.

Typically, pupils have the knowledge they need to tackle more and more complex tasks. On the whole, pupils are confident in using both their reading and mathematical knowledge in different ways to access the whole curriculum successfully. However, pupils' writing fluency is not yet as developed. As a result, pupils' letter formation and spelling are not always in line with the school's expectations.

Across the school, most pupils develop appropriate knowledge across a broad range of subjects. However, pupils' knowledge across the curriculum is more detailed in some subject areas than others.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders analyse and track absence patterns carefully. Where needed, they work closely with parents and carers to help pupils attend school regularly. Leaders understand the barriers pupils face and take appropriate action to address them. Leaders' decisive actions mean attendance is broadly in line with, or above, national averages for all groups.

From the beginning of Reception, children learn the school's routines and expectations well. This builds a culture of care and respect throughout the school. They understand why behaviour is important and can explain the systems clearly. Positive relationships underpin the school's kind, supportive ethos. Staff understand and apply the school's behaviour systems effectively. They use this knowledge to give pupils the support they need to meet the school's high expectations. Staff deal with any incidents of derogatory language or unkindness swiftly and effectively. The result is a nurturing environment where pupils can learn with little disruption.

Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Playtimes are joyful. Pupils of all ages play together happily. They show empathy towards each other and enjoy spending time with their friends.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have put in place a broad, ambitious and well-ordered curriculum. They know where it is working well and where further refinements are needed.

Throughout the school, reading is a priority. Carefully chosen texts support pupils' comprehension and help to build their vocabulary. Skilled staff ensure that pupils who need further practice receive it so they can read fluently. Some pupils have gaps in their writing

fluency, particularly their spelling and letter formation. Leaders' actions to address this are resulting in some improvements for pupils. However, at times, these gaps persist.

Knowledgeable staff are adept at explaining and modelling concepts and new learning. Tasks are typically well designed to help pupils build their learning securely. However, leaders are working to ensure that staff check pupils' understanding consistently well. This is so that any gaps in knowledge are identified swiftly and addressed promptly.

Staff have a secure understanding of pupils' needs and vulnerabilities. They usually support pupils well and adapt learning when this is needed. For example, staff use information from support plans to ensure that the curriculum is carefully adapted to pupils' identified needs and targets. They provide sensitive support so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum successfully.

Early years

Expected standard

Children in early years get off to a positive start. They are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders prioritise developing children's language and communication skills. Staff interactions with children are typically of a high quality. Staff emphasise and model appropriate vocabulary to children effectively. They do this through engaging rhymes and songs that children enjoy and remember.

The teaching of reading begins as soon as children join the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need. Staff have a secure understanding of the school's phonics programme and teach it skilfully. They ensure that children get the chance to practise their reading and writing throughout the curriculum. Children are supported effectively to keep up with their peers.

Leaders have thought carefully about the design of the curriculum in the early years. Leaders have refined the identification of the small steps in learning. This is helping staff to identify gaps in children's knowledge more quickly and effectively. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, engage with meaningful learning across the provision. Leaders and staff work collaboratively with parents and carers. They quickly identify any barriers to learning that children may have. This includes those children who join the school at different times of the year.

Staff build caring and supportive relationships with children. Children seek help from adults if they cannot resolve a problem or when they have worries. Staff respond sensitively to children's individual needs. They help children feel safe and that they belong.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Leaders promote a school culture where diversity is celebrated and every pupil is valued. They make decisions that are firmly rooted in pupils' best interests. For example, leaders have improved classroom resources, which enable pupils to access learning effectively. They also identify specific barriers to learning and put tailored support in place. Well-chosen strategies help pupils to regulate their emotions and be ready to learn. This ensures that pupils' needs are addressed and that they

are fully included in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop increased confidence and independence.

Leaders work well with staff to ensure that the curriculum is adapted effectively. Staff are trained to use a step-by-step approach to assess pupils' needs, plan appropriate support and review their impact. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care progress well from their individual starting points.

Leaders and staff work efficiently with external specialists and pupils' families to ensure that the provision is effective. They monitor pupils' progress systematically and evaluate the impact of interventions to inform future planning. They make changes where required to remove barriers for vulnerable pupils.

Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to enhance access and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders check that this money is having a positive impact on these pupils' progress in all aspects of their education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders understand the community they serve well. They work purposefully to raise aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Together with staff, they ensure that pupils have every opportunity to achieve well. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who face other barriers to learning. They ensure that pupils receive the support they need to succeed.

Leaders have a deep understanding of the strengths and areas that they need to prioritise. They have taken the right actions to ensure that pupils learn increasingly effectively. The layers of governance in the trust fulfil their statutory duties and have a deep knowledge of the school's context. Alongside trust leaders, governors understand their role, and work collaboratively with leaders to challenge them constructively. Leaders ensure that pupils' educational and wider experiences prepare them well for their futures.

Leaders prioritise the workload and wellbeing of staff. As a result, staff feel valued. This creates a team ethos. The school has an open culture where staff feel empowered to share their views. Staff benefit from a well-structured professional development programme that is informed by research and enhanced by the expertise within the trust.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders and staff help pupils to be confident and kind citizens who respect other people's differences. They ensure that the personal development programme is woven across all areas of school life to develop pupils' character. This helps pupils to grow into thoughtful and responsible individuals.

Pastoral support is effective. Positive relationships between pupils and staff underpin a nurturing culture. Targeted support and interventions help pupils to manage issues such as friendship difficulties. The school's mental health and wellbeing strategy ensures that pupils'

needs are identified early. Any additional help is regularly reviewed to ensure it is having the desired impact. As a result, pupils seek assistance when they need it.

Pupils are taught about the importance of British values, and their understanding of these is growing. Pupils talk maturely about differences and similarities between religious celebrations. The personal, social, health and education curriculum enables pupils to develop appropriate knowledge of important topics. This includes how to take care of their mental health and wellbeing and how to understand age-appropriate relationships and consent. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe both online and offline.

Pupils deepen their understanding of the world around them due to the variety of opportunities they experience. These range from pupil-led community projects, such as litter picking in the community.

Pupils participate wholeheartedly in a wide range of events and tournaments where they demonstrate their sporting and musical talents. Leaders track and encourage pupils' participation in these events, including disadvantaged pupils. These opportunities help to develop and broaden pupils' horizons. Leaders carefully select these so that they build pupils' confidence, for example by participating in sports such as Boccia.

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

Pupils are very proud to be part of this nurturing school. There is a community ethos where everyone is encouraged to dream big and keep growing. The school has a calm atmosphere. Staff know pupils well and foster a culture of mutual respect and care. Families are overwhelmingly positive about the contribution the school makes to their children's lives.

Staff form trusting relationships with pupils. These are central to the school's success and foster a secure sense of belonging. Incidents of bullying or discrimination are uncommon. Pupils are confident that staff will help them deal quickly with any concerns they may have. This helps them to feel safe and cared for. Most pupils attend school regularly, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is reflected in published outcomes. Pupils enjoy learning. Most pupils achieve well in reading, mathematics and writing. Some vulnerable pupils have gaps in their letter formation and spelling, but these are closing due to leaders' actions. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically make good progress from their starting points.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, work hard to meet the high expectations of staff. These pupils are particularly well supported by well-trained staff.

Pupils develop responsibility through strategies such as the extensive pupil leadership offer. These opportunities also support every pupil to help others and understand how to make a positive contribution to society. Roles such as safeguarding ambassadors, play leaders and eco council members are valued by pupils. They also benefit from the many chances to participate in clubs such as choir, football and knitting.

Next steps

- Leaders need to further develop staff expertise in checking and deepening pupils' understanding so gaps and misconceptions can be addressed effectively.
- Leaders should continue to develop pupils' writing by embedding their approach to accurate and well-sequenced letter formation and spelling.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Education 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), David Brown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julian Soanes.

This inspection took place from 15 September to 16 September 2026.

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 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. Its last section 48 inspection was September 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery which includes provision for 2-year-olds and 3-year-olds.

Headteacher: Sarah Nickelson

Lead inspector:
Neil Pilsworth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Vanessa Mason, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

131
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: 268

School capacity

157
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)

4.39%
Well 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

3.05%
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

17.56%
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

Well 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	82%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	90%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	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	87%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	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	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25		63%	
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25		59%	
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		78%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25		78%	
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	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 (3 term)	11.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.2%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.8%	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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