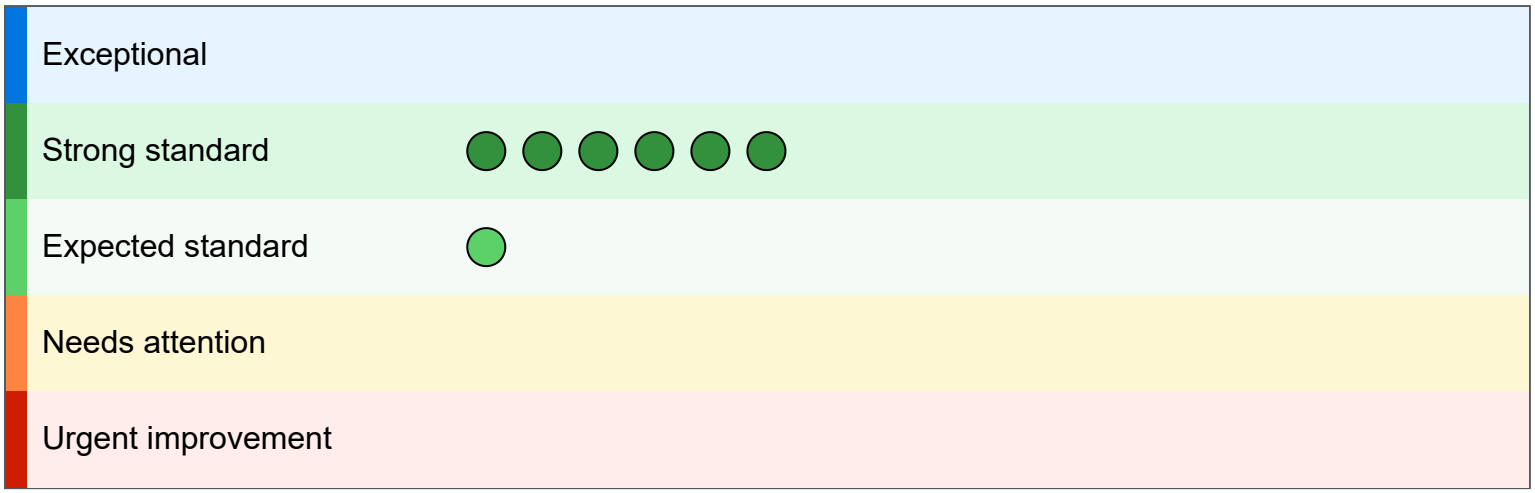
Mereside Church of England Primary Academy

Address: Mereside, Springfield, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6LE

Unique reference number (URN): 147106

Inspection report: 29 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.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders promote the importance of attendance effectively. They analyse information to identify patterns and act swiftly where pupils face barriers to attendance. They work closely with families and external agencies to provide timely support. Leaders' targeted actions have resulted in notable improvements in attendance for both individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, overall attendance is just above the national average and continues to improve. Persistent absence has reduced considerably over time.

Behaviour across the school is extremely positive. Classrooms are orderly and focused. Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. This is because leaders' high expectations and clear routines help pupils to understand what is expected of them. Leaders adapt provision effectively for individuals who need additional help. However, leaders' analysis of the behaviour of different groups of pupils could be strengthened.

Trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel safe and supported. Bullying is not accepted and pupils are confident that staff deal with their concerns quickly and effectively. Older pupils are positive role models. For example, they support other pupils in the playground in their role as peer mentors. Pupils benefit from a calm, purposeful learning environment. They work and play well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the curriculum is being delivered. They regularly consider pupils' needs and use this information to make improvements. Teachers are well trained and have secure subject knowledge. This means that pupils consistently benefit from a high-quality curriculum that is delivered effectively.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It helps children build knowledge, vocabulary and skills over time. Leaders prioritise reading. All pupils receive the right support to begin to read quickly. The well-established phonics programme is taught effectively. Leaders also ensure that pupils gain the fundamental skills they need to succeed in writing and mathematics.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and identify gaps in their knowledge. Skilful questioning allows staff to address misconceptions promptly and plan next steps. They adjust their teaching effectively so that all pupils can learn the curriculum effectively. A range of strategies are used to make lessons accessible, such as modelling, physical resources and the precise deployment of additional adults. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Teaching helps every child feel confident and ready for their next stage of learning.

Early years

Strong standard

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Leaders establish clear routines and high expectations from the moment children enter school. These help children to feel safe and

ready to learn. Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers. They quickly get to know children's interests and any barriers to learning. Staff adapt their teaching precisely to meet children's needs. For example, targeted support with pencil grip and vocabulary development ensures that children receive the help they need to succeed. As a result, children build knowledge and skills securely across all areas of the early years curriculum.

The school's phonics programme is delivered expertly, enabling children to learn to read swiftly. They use the sounds that they know to begin to write independently. Continuous provision is deliberately planned to strengthen early writing and mathematics. It allows children to practise and apply the skills they have been taught with increasing independence.

High-quality interactions between adults and children extend children's learning effectively. Staff are very well trained. They know when to intervene or step back to best support children's independence and engagement. Staff encourage children to work and play together, manage their feelings and build positive relationships. By the end of the Reception year, children are very well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have established a highly inclusive culture that is rooted in a deep understanding of pupils' needs. Every pupil is known and has a voice. This means all pupils feel a real sense of belonging and can thrive. Leaders identify pupils' needs and any barriers they may face quickly and accurately. Staff work in close partnership with parents to overcome difficulties and provide appropriate support.

Effective staff training and regular checks on pupils' learning allow teachers to make careful adaptations to teaching and the learning environment. This enables all pupils to access the full curriculum. Leaders work collaboratively with external specialists to ensure pupils get the support they need. This means their barriers to learning and wellbeing reduce over time.

The needs of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are addressed through academic and enrichment support. This builds pupils' confidence, broadens their experiences and strengthens their aspirations. Leaders track progress and participation carefully to ensure an equitable experience for all pupils.

Alternative provision is thoughtfully selected according to pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from outdoor learning and develop skills for life. Leaders ensure pupils are safe and attend well. As a result, pupils flourish socially and emotionally.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are committed to ensuring that every pupil feels included, achieves and thrives. Leaders' decisions are firmly rooted in what is in pupils' best interests, particularly for those who are vulnerable. This highly inclusive vision is shared by all.

Leaders understand the school's strengths. They wisely identify areas for improvement and take thoughtful, well- considered action. Leaders work closely with colleagues from the trust, sharing ideas and drawing on wider expertise. This helps them to strengthen practice across

the school. Staff professional learning is of a high quality, meaning all staff can develop expertise and follow their interests.

Governance is highly effective. Trustees and the local academy committee are aware of their statutory duties and ensure that these are met. They fully understand the school's context and know its priorities well. Governors use detailed information to challenge and support leaders effectively. They check how resources are used and ensure that decisions benefit pupils, especially those who are the most vulnerable. These partnerships have helped the school make significant improvements over recent years. Together, leaders and governors are well placed to sustain these and improve even further.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. They praise the school's caring and inclusive ethos and value the support available for pupils with additional needs. Leaders take staff wellbeing seriously. Staff feel very well supported and value the consideration given to their workload. Leaders also work positively with other professionals and the wider community to enhance pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders are very ambitious for pupils' personal development and wellbeing. They have established a comprehensive programme that is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are offered a wide range of experiences, including arts and sports events, extra-curricular clubs and educational visits and visitors. Regular themed weeks, for example with a sustainability or careers focus, develop pupils' aspirations and support them to become good citizens. Leaders ensure that all pupils participate and benefit fully from these opportunities.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is well sequenced and thoughtfully adapted to meet pupils' needs and their locality. Pupils speak responsibly and in detail about keeping themselves safe and different types of families and relationships. They discuss sensitive topics with maturity and are confident that, 'whatever you say, it's a safe space'. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They know the importance of tolerance and acceptance of the views and beliefs of others. The curriculum broadens pupils' understanding of diversity beyond their immediate community. They learn about a range of faiths and cultures and visit different places of worship.

The school's values are highly visible and understood by pupils, who take pride in earning recognition for demonstrating them in practice. They actively celebrate one another's achievements, showing care and respect. Pupils speak highly of their school and are proud to be a part of the community.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to school life. They report that the roles they hold, for example on the school council or as house captains, allow them to make meaningful changes and improvements. They learn about a range of careers and how to manage money through entrepreneurial activities such as the 'fiver challenge'. Pupils develop confidence, responsibility and a strong sense of belonging. They are very well prepared for life beyond school.

Expected standard

Achievement **Expected standard**

Pupils at the school generally attain in line with or slightly above national averages over time. The most recent published outcomes show that attainment at the end of key stage 2 has significantly increased. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed considerably. Leaders' targeted use of pupil premium funding has contributed to this improvement.

Pupils build key knowledge and skills securely from their starting points. They know and remember more as they move through the curriculum. Leaders use assessment information to identify priorities and take appropriate action. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points.

Leaders ensure pupils secure early foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who need additional help to learn to read receive effective support. This helps them to catch up and access their wider learning. All pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education and learning.

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

Pupils at Mereside CofE Primary Academy are happy, confident and well cared for. They like coming to school because they feel safe and enjoy learning. Relationships are warm and respectful, and everyone is included. The school values of love, community, wisdom, joy, hope, peace and dignity are central to school life.

Pupils behave very well, both in lessons and around the school building. They follow the school rules responsibly and take pride in their work. From the early years onwards, clear routines and expectations help pupils understand what is expected of them. Attendance is high. Pupils want to come to school. They say bullying is rare, and trust adults to help them with any problems.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. This means that any barriers pupils may face are identified quickly when they start at the school. Support is provided to ensure that all pupils can succeed and thrive, both academically and socially.

The curriculum is engaging and builds logically. A wide range of effective adaptations are in place, which supports pupils to be independent and resilient learners. Themed weeks enrich the curriculum and make learning memorable. As a result, all pupils typically make good progress and achieve well in national assessments. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed considerably over recent years.

All pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that broaden their experiences and allow them to develop their talents and interests. These include a variety of extra-curricular clubs, visits from authors and poets, residential stays and careers activities. Pupils are also encouraged to develop responsibility through the many leadership positions available which

include being a sports captain, reading buddy or a prefect. This thoughtful and inclusive approach means that pupils are extremely well prepared for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that the quality of teaching remains consistently high so that recent high outcomes are sustained over time.
- Leaders should further develop their analysis of the behaviour of different groups of pupils in order to demonstrate impact in more detail.

About this inspection

This school is part of St. Chad's Academies 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), Sarah Cockshott, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Fiona Stagg.

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 the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. They also spoke with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, deputy CEO and hub lead, and representatives of the trust board and the diocese.

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 Lichfield.

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Lindsey Hughes

Lead inspector:
Claire Medhurst, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Kerrise James, Ofsted Inspector
Philip Hamilton, 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 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

364
Above 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

420
Above 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)

14.84%
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

4.67%
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

6.87%
Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31%	46%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	31%	67%	-36 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	80%	-36 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	64%	78%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-21 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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
2025/26 (1 term)	4.3%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	12.3%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	13.0%	13.0%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.2%	14.6%	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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