

Frieth Church of England Combined School

Address: Frieth Church of England Combined School, Frieth, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 6PR

Unique reference number (URN): 110461

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve well consistently. This is reflected in statutory test outcomes that are above national averages. Core skills of reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. Pupils learn to read fluently and develop a love of reading. They learn to write at length with accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Sometimes, when expectations are not reinforced, pupils' handwriting skills are not as consistent as they could be, however.

Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders prioritise developing pupils' communication skills through their chosen teaching approach. Consequently, pupils become confident and articulate communicators. They can use a range of vocabulary. They articulate their views coherently and engage in debate.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, demonstrate a deep knowledge across the wider curriculum. Pupils build connections within and between subjects. Pupils secure age-appropriate mathematical skills. Together, this means that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

This is a highly inclusive school. Leaders have a detailed understanding of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' analysis of pupils' needs is forensic. This enables them to identify and implement appropriate support swiftly.

Leaders prioritise high-quality teaching, supplemented by targeted provision. This ensures that pupils, including those with SEND, get what they need to thrive. Teaching strategies that promote discussion help all pupils to contribute during lessons. One-to-one mentoring provides personalised support. Leaders analyse the impact of their work closely. They use this information to adapt provision for pupils systematically. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils with the most complex needs are supported highly effectively. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and external agencies. This makes sure that adjustments and adaptations are closely matched to their needs.

The pupil premium strategy is sharply focused to an individual level. This ensures that targeted provision for disadvantaged pupils is carefully planned and highly effective. For example, mentoring and daily feedback have demonstrable impact on identified pupils. High-quality training and support ensure that staff are well positioned to deliver the strategy.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is informed by the school's rural context. The curriculum is enriched by

strong community partnerships, educational visits and enrichment opportunities. For example, the on-site forest school fosters leadership skills and promotes wellbeing. Leaders capitalise on the rich local area when delivering the curriculum. Pupils benefit from regular visits to the Lady Ryder walled garden and local farm. This helps pupils to develop a deep understanding of horticulture and farming.

Pupils develop a secure and detailed knowledge of the curriculum. Pupils understand puberty, healthy relationships and staying safe online and offline. Pupils make pertinent connections between aspects of learning. For example, they apply knowledge of family structures to learning about civil partnerships and adoption.

Pupils are inclusive. They understand and respect differences. Bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Pupils appreciate other cultures and beliefs. They think deeply and communicate ideas respectfully. British values are embedded. Pupils make connections between these values and real-world experiences. The many leadership roles, such as junior road safety officers and eco-council, are decided through voting, for example.

Pupils receive an extensive extra-curricular offer. Clubs are plentiful. There are many opportunities for pupils to represent the school in sporting events. Participation is tracked carefully. This ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from the opportunities on offer. Pastoral support is strong. Mentoring and daily feedback sessions are highly effective, supporting academic and pastoral needs. For some pupils, the support they receive has had a profound impact.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are confident and ambitious. They communicate effectively and articulate their thinking clearly. They have the skills to debate ideas. Consequently, pupils leave Frieth as well-rounded and compassionate young citizens.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attend well. Few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders put in place strategies that encourage all pupils to attend regularly and arrive promptly. For example, many pupils participate in early morning clubs, such as choir and netball. This helps to ensure that pupils have a positive transition into the school day. Leaders provide support when pupils need help to attend more regularly. They work closely with parents and carers to put in place appropriate strategies. As a result, where leaders focus their attention, attendance improves.

Pupils largely behave well. This is because routines and expectations are embedded. Pupils are keen to learn. However, when teaching is not as sharp as it could be, pupils sometimes become distracted. During social times, pupils play happily together. Occasional disagreements between pupils are resolved calmly. Pupils say that bullying does not happen at this school. They are confident that adults will help them if they are worried. Discrimination is not tolerated. Leaders take swift action where incidents occur. They work

closely with pupils, parents and external agencies in their response. Leaders minimise the risk of future incidents by carefully adapting their provision in response to pupils' needs.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully tailored to pupils' needs. Leaders prioritise academic learning and wider skills. The curriculum is structured and sequenced thoughtfully. It enables pupils to build and develop knowledge and understanding steadily over time.

Teaching is generally effective. Staff present information clearly. They typically use questioning to check pupils' understanding. Misconceptions are usually addressed. This helps pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to develop core skills in reading, writing and mathematics suitably well.

Pupils are taught to read effectively. Pupils develop the skills of writing appropriately. Sometimes, opportunities to help pupils develop a secure pencil grip are missed. Pupils learn to use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Handwriting can be uneven where expectations are not reinforced, however.

Leaders ensure that staff are well equipped to deliver the curriculum. Learning tasks and activities generally enable pupils to practise and apply the learning they have been taught. Sometimes, opportunities for talk and the learning environment for younger pupils are not sharply focused, however.

Pupils with SEND receive high-quality support. Highly personalised strategies ensure that these pupils can participate in learning alongside their peers successfully.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children are happy and safe in the early years. Children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make steady progress from their starting points. Children are typically very well prepared for Year 1. This is reflected in above-average proportions of children achieving a good level of development. Leaders get to know children and their families quickly. Transition into the early years is considered carefully. This ensures that leaders identify and put in place appropriate support for children so they can thrive alongside their peers.

The curriculum is thoughtfully planned. It is well sequenced to align with statutory requirements and children's needs. Core skills of reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. They are generally taught effectively. Staff interact purposefully with children. They model spoken language skills and encourage discussion. This helps children to broaden their vocabulary and become confident young communicators. Sharpening interactions further would help to maximise opportunities for learning, however.

Children behave well and engage with the environment positively. They benefit from playing alongside their peers and working closely with adults. Sometimes, the learning environment for children's play is not set up as precisely as it could be. Children do not consistently

understand how to engage with the resources on offer. This means that sometimes opportunities for learning are missed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are highly ambitious. They have a secure vision for the school. Leaders have increased the school's capacity over the last 4 years. They have changed the leadership structure. These actions are in the best interests of pupils. Recent changes, such as those to the early years provision, are in the early stages. Therefore, time is needed for these changes to be embedded and the impact fully realised. Leaders use their detailed knowledge of the school and pupils to inform strategic decisions. They identify priorities appropriately. They implement and monitor these consistently. Consequently, areas that leaders focus on continue to improve.

Governors are effective. They share leaders' vision for the school and work collaboratively to secure ongoing development. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding is a priority. Governors assure themselves of the impact of leaders' work by providing appropriate support and challenge. They evaluate the impact of their work closely.

Staff enjoy working at Frieth. They say that leaders care about them and their wellbeing. Leaders take tangible steps to reduce workload and ensure that staff are well equipped to fulfil their responsibilities. The professional learning programme is sharply designed. Opportunities for further training and professional collaboration are plentiful.

Leaders, including governors, have established highly effective relationships with parents and carers, professionals and the wider community. Engagement with the neighbouring church, local organisations and events helps to ensure that the school is a valued part of the village. Consequently, parents are effusive in their praise for the school. Comments describe leaders and staff as supportive, caring and nurturing.

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

Pupils are happy and proud of their school. They start the day with smiles on their faces. They are greeted by adults who care about them. As a result, pupils feel they belong. Pupils attend regularly. They benefit from an extensive range of opportunities and experiences that enrich school life. For example, many pupils arrive at school early to participate in morning running club, netball club and choir. These activities encourage pupils to arrive punctually and be ready to learn.

Pupils generally behave well during lessons and focus on their learning. This is because routines are embedded and pupils understand what is expected of them. During social times, pupils play well together. They are active. They enjoy playing netball and using the climbing equipment. Pupils say that bullying does not happen at Frieth. They know how to identify adults who can help them if they are worried, however. They are confident that staff will sort out any problems. Consequently, pupils feel safe.

Pupils enjoy learning. Teachers generally present information clearly. The classroom environment, tasks and activities usually help pupils to practise and apply their learning. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to discuss their learning. Typically, this helps pupils to develop their communication skills and deepen understanding.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. This provides them with the academic skills and broader attributes that prepare them very well for life in modern Britain. They develop secure and detailed knowledge across the curriculum. For example, pupils talk about how artists inform the development of their skills in sketching, shading and pattern work.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well across the curriculum. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is reflected in outcomes that are consistently above national averages.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to implement their strategic plans, during a period of transition in leadership, to ensure that standards are maintained and continue to improve further, particularly in curriculum and teaching and the early years.
 - Leaders should continue to develop the learning environment in the early years and key stage 1, strengthening adult interactions so that opportunities for learning are maximised and pupils remain focused on the intended learning.
 - Leaders should maintain high expectations for writing so that pupils develop and demonstrate secure handwriting skills consistently.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Bradley Jones.

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 school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with members of the board of governors, representatives from the local authority and diocese, staff, pupils and parents.

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 in January 2022.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school has grown and the published admission number has increased. The leadership team has recently been restructured. The deputy headteacher is recently appointed. Temporary arrangements are currently in place for the leadership of the early years and special educational needs. A new early years leader has been appointed for September 2026.

Headteacher: Martin Gosling

Lead inspector:

Anneka Fisher, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nic Browne, Ofsted Inspector

Charlene Martin Bakermault, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

157

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

148

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)

5.10%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

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

0.64%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

7.01%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	83%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	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)	90%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	93%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	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	90%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	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		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
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)	3.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	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)	4.7%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.6%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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