

Samuel White's Infant School

Address: Abbots Avenue, Hanham, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, BS15 3PN

Unique reference number (URN): 149945

Inspection report: 19 May 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.

Exceptional ●

Early years

Exceptional ●

The early years provision is extremely nurturing, ambitious and inclusive. Children receive an exceptional start to school life and achieve impressively well. The setting has a transformational impact on the most vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They flourish in the provision.

Leaders use their considerable expertise in early education to ensure that the curriculum precisely meets children's needs. Continuous checking helps them adapt it as needed to overcome barriers to success. For example, children in the Nursery Year are taught how to sit up straight, control heavy tools and manipulate small implements in readiness for learning to write. Children in Reception Year are taught to read and spell securely using phonics, and to write the sounds they hear in neat, correctly formed letters. Extremely effective partnership working ensures seamless transition from Nursery Year into school and from Reception Year to Year 1.

Before children join the Nursery Year or Reception Year classes, staff take great care to understand their starting points and needs. Expert teaching ensures that children secure the personal, social, emotional and academic developmental steps needed at each stage. Adults meticulously craft their interactions with children. Every conversation is precisely focused on giving children specific language and vocabulary needed for future learning.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. They develop detailed knowledge and achieve well across the curriculum. Outcomes in national assessments are consistently above average.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, speak confidently about their learning. For example, they can explain the important legacy left by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as seen in famous Bristol landmarks. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well. They reach similar standards to their peers. Some pupils start school with low starting points. They catch up quickly and achieve well.

Pupils achieve well because the school places great emphasis on securing essential basic skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils learn to read fluently using phonics. They write neat, correctly spelled and well-punctuated sentences. They recall number facts readily. This prepares pupils very well for the greater challenge of the curriculum that they will encounter in key stage 2.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

The importance of high attendance is consistently promoted by all staff. Leaders support parents to overcome barriers to bringing their children to school regularly and punctually. They take appropriate action when attendance falls below expectations. As a result, pupils' attendance continues to improve year on year and now sits at a high rate. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

The school has very high expectations for behaviour. These are implemented with great consistency. As a result, pupils know exactly how to conduct themselves at all times and meet expectations consistently. Pupils who struggle to behave well receive highly effective support that helps them settle into school life and learn how to get on with others. Pupils consistently show high levels of respect for others. Pupils say that bullying is rare and would not be tolerated if it were to happen.

Pupils show an impressive degree of self-discipline. For example, when involved in independent activities, pupils share space and equipment without arguing. They collect and use resources sensibly, remaining focused on the task in hand. Children in the Nursery Year confidently line up for lunch, chat sociably as they eat and tidy up their plates without the need for adult support.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Pupils benefit from a highly ambitious and coherent curriculum. Leaders have shaped it to precisely meet pupils' developing needs as they get older. For example, the curriculum prioritises communication, personal skills and physical development for the youngest children. As they move up the school, it emphasises their reading, writing and mathematical skills. In Year 2, the curriculum ensures that pupils have the full range of knowledge and skills to be well prepared for moving on to key stage 2.

Leaders have created absolute clarity about the most effective teaching strategies to ensure that pupils secure essential knowledge. As a result, pupils feel secure in lessons. They are unafraid to make mistakes, knowing that teachers will help them learn from these.

Teachers focus relentlessly on ensuring that pupils learn to communicate, read, write and calculate. Teachers use assessment well to check that all pupils are mastering what they need to at each stage. They use this information to intervene quickly to address misconceptions or provide extra practice as needed. For example, if a pupil forms a letter incorrectly, the teacher will point out the error to the pupil, show them how to write it correctly and give them time to practise.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders are determined to leave nothing to chance in their support of the school's most vulnerable pupils. Staff quickly identify pupils' needs and the barriers they may face to their learning and/or wellbeing. They provide the support needed for these pupils to be safe and happy and to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported to manage any emotional, cognitive or physical challenges

associated with school life. These pupils' positive experience is reflected in their high levels of attendance and their strong academic achievement.

Staff know every pupil very well. They have a detailed understanding of pupils' individual needs and of their academic progress. Teachers are skilled in making adjustments that remove barriers and ensure that all pupils achieve well and thrive.

Leaders make astute decisions about the use of additional funding to support pupils experiencing financial disadvantage to succeed. For example, leaders have supported some pupils to attend school frequently and to arrive on time. This has helped them to feel a sense of belonging to the school and to thrive academically. Leaders work well with the local authority to ensure that pupils who are known to social care are able to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Governors, trustees and school and trust leaders share a clear vision and determination for this school to provide an exceptional early education for its pupils, within the wider context of being federated with the junior school next door. Pupils are at the heart of this vision and of the decisions taken by leaders at every level.

Leaders understand the school's strengths precisely, and they continuously seek ways to improve further. This drive is underpinned by a deep moral purpose to provide the best for all, including the most disadvantaged pupils. Nothing is left to chance to achieve that aim.

Leaders see staff as the key driver to achieving their ambition. To this end, leaders are deeply committed to staff's professional development. Leaders in school and from the trust ensure that staff have the subject and pedagogical expertise needed to reduce barriers to learning where they exist and ensure that pupils achieve well. Staff are extremely positive about the support they receive for their professional development and their wellbeing.

Governors and trustees have a secure understanding of their statutory duties and fulfil these effectively, for example by having robust oversight of safeguarding and attendance. Almost all parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey would recommend the school. Parents typically appreciate the caring and passionate staff, the nurturing environment and the high standards.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school provides a rich and inclusive personal development programme that prepares pupils extremely well for life beyond their time in this school. The school's personal, social and health curriculum is comprehensive and meticulously planned. It includes suitable relationships education. Pupils develop a detailed understanding of important issues such as how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world. They learn about different families, how to be a good friend and the importance of treating people with tolerance and respect. Pupils confidently describe similarities and differences in the religions they have been taught about. They can talk about British values, explaining what they mean. For example, they talk about democracy as everyone having the right to have their say. The curriculum helps pupils to become reflective, responsible and active citizens. Pupils take great pride in their school and their place in its community.

Alongside the formal personal development curriculum, pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences and enrichment opportunities, including sports clubs, 'cosy' reading sessions in the library or visiting the local farm to see where our food comes from. These experiences broaden pupils' horizons and support them to develop hobbies and talents. Leaders plan the offer to ensure that every pupil benefits from it in ways that suit their needs and interests. As with other aspects of the pupils' experience, leaders are driven to make the personal development offer highly inclusive. They ensure that any barriers to participation are removed so that all pupils benefit from wider school life.

Secure, trusting relationships underpin the highly effective pastoral support available to pupils. They feel safe, happy and well cared for. Pupils who struggle to control their emotions receive calm, sensitive, expert support. They learn to manage their feelings and develop respect for those of others.

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

From the moment pupils arrive at Samuel White's, staff provide a warm welcome and ensure that school is a positive, rewarding experience. Staff leave no stone unturned to ensure that pupils feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Pupils thrive because staff are relentless in their efforts to provide the very best for them.

Pupils are very proud of their school, describing their experience using words such as 'exhilarating' and 'exciting'. Their love of school is reflected in their high rates of attendance. Pupils understand that staff care about them and are willing to help if they have concerns. They feel valued and respected and have a sense of belonging.

Pupils behave extremely well. They understand the school's expectations to be ready, respectful and safe. They interact kindly with each other and enjoy harmonious playtimes. They consistently show respect, empathy, self-discipline and integrity in their behaviour. Bullying rarely happens. Pupils say that it would not be tolerated if it were to occur.

Learning is purposeful and engaging. Pupils enjoy lessons and speak very positively about their teachers, describing them as kind, helpful and supportive. They understand the importance of hard work and aspire to succeed. Staff go to great lengths to overcome barriers that pupils may have to learning. As a result, pupils thrive and achieve very well academically. They become confident, fluent readers and learn to write and calculate accurately. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school's personal development offer is expertly coordinated, enabling each pupil to benefit socially and emotionally. Pupils learn about relationships, managing risks, staying healthy and being a good citizen. A rich offer of clubs, trips and other experiences is designed to bring out the very best in each pupil.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure continued improvement to their curriculum implementation to achieve and sustain exceptional standards of teaching across the school, which have a transformational impact on the achievement of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of The Leaf 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), Ross Newman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Simmons-Bird.

The school is part of a federation called Hanham Primary Federation.

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, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and groups of staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with the CEO, director of education and members of the local governing board and board of trustees.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Gabrielle Howells

Lead inspector:

Sandy Hayes, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspector:

Catherine Beeks, 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

246

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 272

School capacity

270

Close to 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)

9.21%

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

2.03%

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

7.72%

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).

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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	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
2024/25 (3 term)	8.6%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	14.6%	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.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright