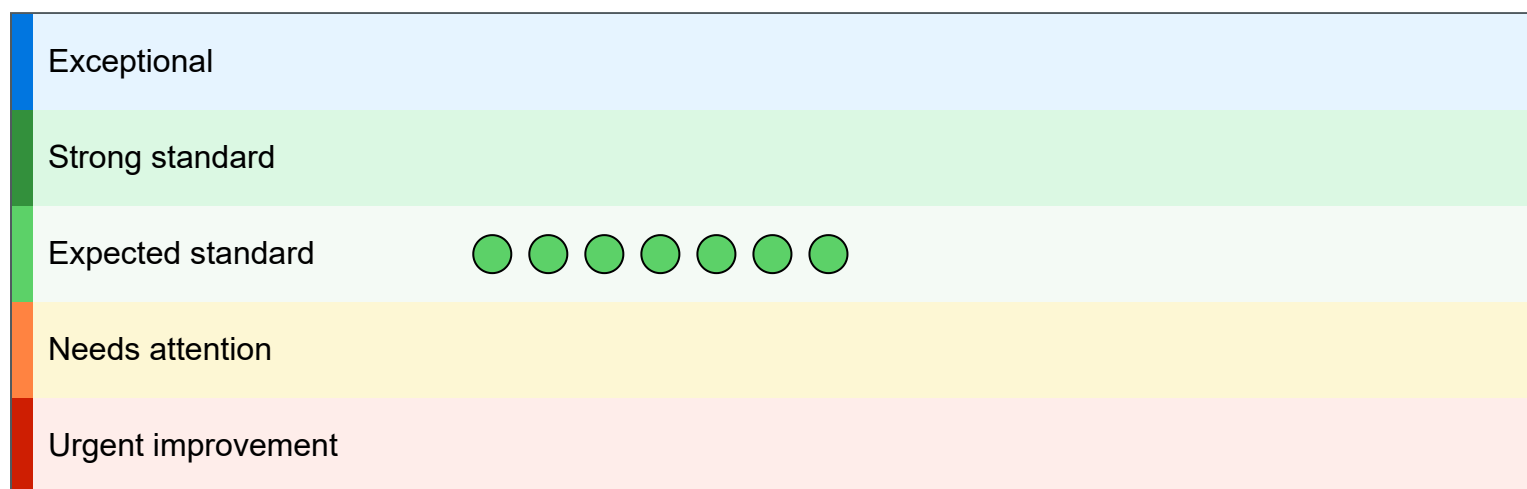


Spellbrook CofE Primary School

Address: London Road, Spellbrook, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 4BA

Unique reference number (URN): 117405

Inspection report: 10 February 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 

Leaders carefully track and review pupils' progress across the curriculum. They respond quickly to dips or changes in the school's achievement information and adjust their approach so each pupil gets the support they need to succeed. Because the school has small year groups with varied needs, outcomes in national tests can fluctuate when compared to national results. Even so, pupils achieve well in phonics, where results continue to exceed national averages. An increasing number of children possess the knowledge and skills they need by the end of the Reception Year. Staff prepare pupils well for learning in Year 1.

The progress that pupils make across the curriculum is clear in the work they produce. This shows how pupils build knowledge over time and apply what they have learned. Leaders use this information to check that pupils are on track and to plan any extra help when needed.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders analyse attendance information closely and use this information to identify the reasons for poor attendance. Because the school is small, absences can affect the percentages for some pupil groups. Staff intervene early and work with families to remove barriers effectively. For example, leaders meet regularly with the local authority each term to discuss attendance. The school's pick-up and drop-off systems help ensure pupils arrive on time. Staff make daily phone calls to check on absences and pupils' wellbeing.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff have high expectations and consistently follow the school's approach to behaviour. Staff help pupils understand and talk about their feelings from the moment they start school. Pupils learn to communicate their worries. They say that unkind behaviour is rare. Pupils know what to do if they experience bullying or discriminatory behaviour. They trust adults to resolve any problems if they occur. Pupils learn to make appropriate choices and manage their emotions. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. When needed, staff put in place support for pupils who may need extra help to manage their behaviour. Playtimes are generally positive and pupils play well together. Teachers think carefully about classroom layout so all pupils can access learning. These approaches help pupils stay safe, behave respectfully and be ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum in each subject is planned so pupils build knowledge and vocabulary in a clear sequence. Implementation varies in a few subjects and leaders are taking action to improve this. Teachers use what they know about pupils' needs and starting points to guide their teaching and give helpful feedback.

Leaders check pupils' progress closely and use this information to improve how the curriculum is taught. Staff have secure subject knowledge and leaders provide focused training and support. This helps staff teach the curriculum and apply the school's inclusion charter consistently well.

The charter sets out what each class needs and helps staff think about how to adapt learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have made deliberate decisions about how staff teach the curriculum. The consistent and targeted approach in phonics helps pupils meet national expectations. Leaders are supporting staff to apply the same level of rigour and consistency to other subjects.

Pupils develop firm foundations in English and mathematics. They talk confidently about their learning across the curriculum. Leaders have considered how pupils progress through school and into secondary education to ensure pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years

Expected standard ●

Leaders design the early years curriculum, so children build essential knowledge in a clear and sequenced way. Children in Nursery and the Reception Year share a well-organised learning environment. Staff meet each child's needs and guide their learning with care and skill. Staff plan a full induction for parents, carers and children. This builds positive links between home and school from the start.

Clear and predictable routines help children settle quickly each morning. Staff help them focus, stay attentive and take pride in completing tasks. They design learning experiences that develop children's understanding of the world and build their physical skills and coordination. For example, children create their own versions of Aboriginal art using dot-painting techniques. Staff design structured sessions alongside purposeful independent learning. They use modelling and meaningful interactions to develop children's language. Staff encourage children to explore the learning environment and try new activities, helping them grow in confidence and independence.

Staff closely monitor children's progress and share achievements with parents. This communication helps parents celebrate successes. It enables staff to spot learning gaps or early signs of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff respond quickly by offering support or seeking specialist advice. Teachers begin teaching early reading as soon as children enter the Reception Year. Consistent phonics teaching from the start helps children excel in this area as they move on to their next stages of learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

Leaders have introduced a new inclusion charter that sets out the support and adjustments to learning which pupils need to succeed, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff receive effective training so they can put these approaches into practice. Pupils explain how the adaptations and resources help them learn well. Leaders and staff take time to get to know pupils. They carry out home and school visits before pupils start school. This helps staff identify needs early and helps parents support their children as they settle into school.

In the early years, staff use an online learning journal to share milestones with parents. These observations help teachers spot extra needs, identify gaps in learning and provide support. The school works closely with parents and carers, who value the clear

communication between home and school.

Leaders seek advice from a wide range of professionals to make sure the school meets pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Teachers create learning plans with clear strategies and staff follow these carefully. Leaders review the impact of any extra support and adjust it when needed. They shape provision so pupils learn alongside their peers, using targeted or individual support when required.

The school uses funding carefully to help disadvantaged pupils. Leaders track participation and create further opportunities to help close gaps and improve outcomes.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard ●

Governors have supported the school well through a period of change. Several staff, leaders and governors are new to the school. Governors see these changes as an opportunity for new perspectives and skills to enhance the school and further improve the offer for all pupils. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. They seek advice and training to enhance their knowledge and hold leaders to account.

The new leadership team has identified clear priorities for improvement and has begun to put these into action. They have also recognised the strengths already in place. Pupils and staff speak positively about the recent changes. Parents and carers appreciate the visibility of the leadership team and speak positively about the care their children receive. Leaders consider how to improve outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. The implementation of the inclusion charter is ensuring improved outcomes and provision for all. Pupils use the support and adaptations provided in class to help their learning.

Leaders have formed partnerships with other schools, which has strengthened self-evaluation and created opportunities to share practice. Leaders know the school, its pupils and families well. They seek external support when needed and model their expectations clearly to staff.

A coherent plan is improving staff's professional learning while taking account of staff wellbeing and workload. Leaders share essential information and changes with all staff. They give staff time and support to make the improvements they want to see and celebrate what is going well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard ●

Leaders design the personal development programme so that pupils are prepared socially, academically, and emotionally for success. Through the personal, social and health education curriculum and wider opportunities, leaders broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils deepen their understanding of fundamental British values and celebrate the cultural diversity of modern Britain. Leaders continue to refine this work to extend opportunities even further.

The school's programme for personal development begins in the early years. Staff focus on children's personal, social, and emotional development so they make the most of the opportunities available to them. Staff teach children how to express their feelings and model

positive behaviour. They help them resolve conflicts and teach them how to play and learn well together.

Teachers link learning across subjects, so pupils revisit key knowledge such as online safety and the importance of physical and mental health and diet. This helps learning stick. Alongside the taught curriculum, leaders plan a programme of events across the year and respond quickly to emerging needs or new trends. Every child in Year 6 takes on a leadership role that contributes to the smooth running of the school. Pupils understand these responsibilities and act as positive role models for younger children. They learn how to advocate for change.

Many pupils who joined the school after the Reception Year describe how warmly staff welcomed them and how this helped them feel part of the school community. Pupils learn to appreciate differences and understand the importance of belonging and kindness.

Pupils can explore many opportunities to develop their talents and interests in the arts, music, and sport. Staff run popular lunchtime and after-school clubs, like dodgeball, chess, football, mindfulness, karate, and art. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, take up these opportunities. Residential visits and school-based camping experiences help create lasting memories.

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

This is a welcoming and inclusive school. Many pupils join the school at different stages of their educational journey. The school community quickly includes new pupils and helps them feel valued. Staff help pupils settle, build friendships, and develop confidence. Pupils value the care provided and know there is always someone to talk with if they have a worry. They are confident that staff will resolve any concerns regarding bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance. Generally, most attend well. They enjoy the routines and settle quickly each morning.

Pupils speak positively about recent changes. They understand what is expected of them and know what it means to be safe, respectful, and ready. Most behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. Staff promote respectful behaviour, ensuring pupils have the support, guidance, and resources they need to learn effectively.

Pupils enjoy their learning and typically achieve well, particularly during the early stages of learning to read. In a range of subjects, pupils build knowledge and skills effectively. They take pride in their achievements and can identify how they have responded to feedback and improved their work. The new inclusion charter sets out what every child needs in order to learn and succeed. Staff usually apply this well across the curriculum adapting learning so that it is accessible for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy taking part in school life and taking on leadership roles, such as school councillors and house captains. This helps them take responsibility and act as role models

for younger pupils. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs, trips, and visitors that create lasting memories and help develop their talents and interests.

Next steps

- Leaders should provide staff with the support they need to ensure that teaching approaches, adaptations to learning and the inclusion charter are applied consistently and effectively across the curriculum.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Warren Hasty.

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, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian (Church of England) religious character. The last section 48 inspection was in 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and leadership team.

The number of pupils on roll at the time of the inspection was 106.

Headteacher: Carly Cousins

Lead inspector:

Oriana Dalton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

James Adkins, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

116

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

120

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

21.90%

Close to 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

1.72%

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

14.66%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	88%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	88%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100%	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 (revised)	S	47%	S
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%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
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 (revised)	S	59%	S
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 (revised)	S	61%	S
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 (revised)	S	69%	S
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 (revised)	S	81%	S
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 (revised)	S	78%	S
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 (revised)	S	81%	S
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 (2 term)	6.4%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	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 (2 term)	16.3%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.0%	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.

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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

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