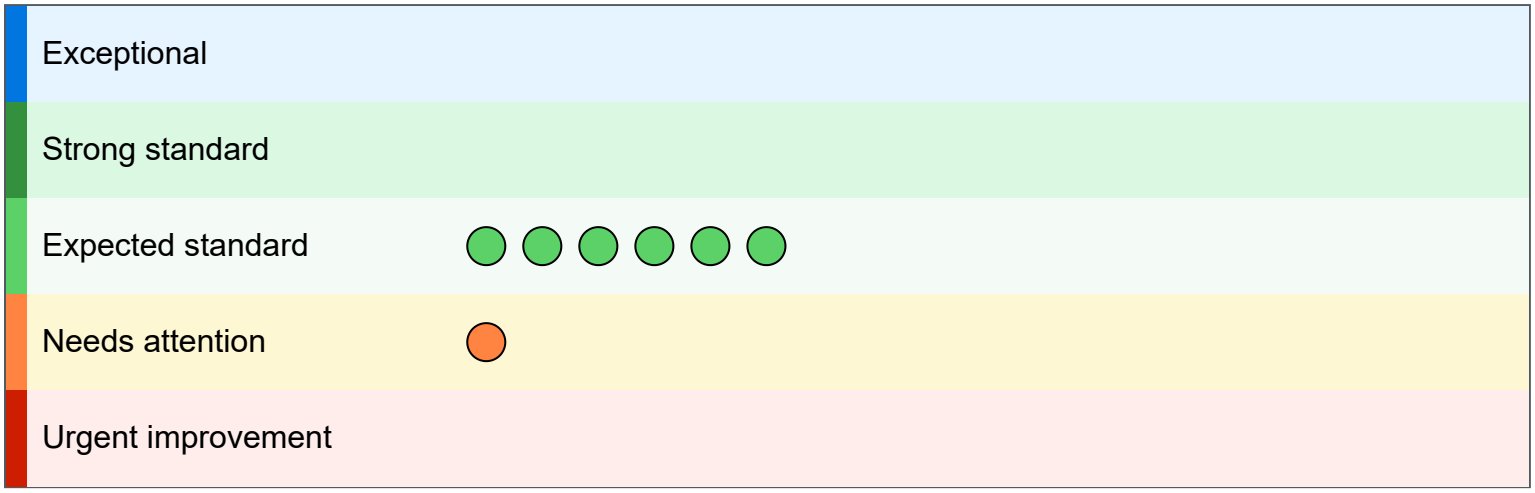
Swanage Primary School

Address: Swanage Primary School, Mount Scar, Mount Scar, Swanage Primary School, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2EY

Unique reference number (URN): 150246

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils gain age-appropriate subject knowledge across curriculum subjects. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who face barriers to their learning, make suitable progress from their starting points. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge are closing quickly, for example in reading fluency.

The whole school focus on pupils securing their basics skills has a palpable impact. For example, the youngest pupils learn correct pencil grip and letter formation. Older pupils have fluent joined handwriting and use complex sentences well. Pupils recall their number facts quickly and this helps them solve number problems later on.

Children achieve highly at the end of Reception Year. This sets them up well for Year 1. Recently published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have risen markedly in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are keeping up with the curriculum well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders understand the strengths of curriculum and teaching. They are proactive in making refinements when needed. The curriculum is sequenced effectively and includes the breadth of knowledge it should. Leaders ensure that staff implement the curriculum well across a full range of subjects.

The teaching of early reading is very effective. Pupils learn to use and apply their phonics knowledge to read proficiently. Pupils confidently access the wider curriculum and gain a secure understanding of what they read. Typically, staff design well-thought-out teaching sequences. For example, in science, staff ensure that pupils recap prior knowledge and learn important new vocabulary. This helps pupils investigate with confidence and draw pertinent conclusions.

Staff typically have secure subject knowledge in the subjects and phases they teach. For example, staff model the agreed teaching strategies in mathematics and ensure pupils' quick recall of number facts. However, there are occasions when teaching does not consistently build on what pupils know. This prevents them from practising the most complex mathematical concepts as soon as they are ready. At times, these pupils have to sit and wait for new work. When this happens, their concentration can wander.

Early years

Expected standard

The wide-ranging curriculum is well sequenced across Nursery and Reception. Staff implement it well across all 7 areas of learning. As a result, children build their knowledge and skills incrementally over time. This prepares them for Year 1 well. The early years statutory duties are met in full.

Caring staff model the school's expectations consistently. This ensures that children settle quickly and become experts in following the school's routines, for example at tidy-up time. The learning environment creates a safe and exciting place to learn. Staff nurture everyone. Children become highly inquisitive and keen to learn as a result. Children often brim with pride when they are learning new skills for the first time.

Staff use their secure subject knowledge to tailor their teaching to address any barriers to children's learning or development. For example, they prioritise developing children's gross and fine motor skills. Staff teach the basics of early reading and the concept of number well. There is a deliberate focus on ensuring that children practise important skills. For example, children use accurate pencil grip when completing observational drawing. Staff engage children in high-quality interactions to develop their early language and communication, and mathematical language, particularly effectively.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Staff, parents and carers and external agencies work closely to ensure that they identify and support the ongoing and changing needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). On the whole, this ensures that when pupils face barriers to learning, they get the right support at the right time. Staff receive substantial training to support the implementation of any bespoke strategies pupils require. Staff routinely use a range of physical adaptations, visual and sensory resources so that pupils access their learning well. Leaders maintain oversight and check the impact of teaching interventions.

The school uses additional funding effectively to ensure that gaps in disadvantaged pupils' learning are closing and that these pupils have equal and fair access to extra-curricular opportunities. When alternative provision is commissioned, leaders maintain appropriate oversight of the education provided and the welfare of any pupils who attend.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and the trust have worked in tandem over a sustained period to bring about rapid improvements to many aspects of the school. For example, pupils' attendance has improved markedly. Pupils' achievement, including in the early years, has strengthened considerably. Leaders use the support they receive productively. For example, they provide staff with coaching and this, in turn, ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their leadership and teaching roles effectively. The trust commissions external evaluation to check how well the school is performing and that their advice is accurate. This, alongside internal checks on teaching, ensure that the school prioritises the right aspects for ongoing school improvement.

The local governing body understands the school's context. It fulfils its duties well. For example, it has oversight of the safeguarding culture, the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils' attendance.

On the whole, staff value the professional development opportunities they receive and the way that leaders support their wellbeing. However, staff recognise that leaders do not have

stringent oversight of lunchtime behaviour. Leaders do not identify or analyse well enough when repeated behaviour incidents or accidents happen.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

There is a suitable programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing in place. It is well sequenced. Staff typically implement the programme effectively. Pupils gain a suitable range of knowledge of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum as a result. It teaches pupils important contextual information about keeping safe in the locality, for example about water safety. The programme teaches pupils about democracy, through voting pupils onto the school council and house system. The relationships and sex and health education curriculum includes all the required knowledge for pupils to learn. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and about the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles.

The school teaches pupils about the importance of equality and not to discriminate. Pupils talk with confidence about right and wrong and the importance of being treated fairly. They learn about a range of religions and cultures. Pupils become reflective of their own beliefs as a result. Caring and skilled staff provide a range of pastoral support. This support is adapted to meet pupils' changing needs. Staff provide a range of effective emotional and social therapies. Pupils are confident that staff will help them. Pupils value using 'worry boxes' and giving messages to the 'worry monster'. This ensures that pupils can raise concerns anonymously. Pupils are confident that staff address these concerns in a timely way. This approach supports pupils' emotional wellbeing very well.

The curriculum provides a range of extra-curricular activities and experiences, such as attending community events. This helps pupils understand what it is to be a young citizen and give back and serve the community. However, there are times when pupils do not apply important concepts they should, for example they do not always cooperate consistently with others, as seen in their variable behaviour at lunchtimes.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Leaders' increased monitoring of pupils' attendance since September 2025 has brought about rapid improvement, including for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance is now in line with the national average. Leaders work with a range of external agencies such as educational welfare officers and secondary schools to ensure that pupils and families get the right support to attend well. Any barriers to non-attendance are addressed head on. Persistent absence is reducing as a result. When needed, suspensions are used appropriately and recurrences are rare.

Leaders and staff typically act as role models in lesson time. This helps teach pupils the positive behaviour leaders expect, for example 'super sitting' in lessons. These established routines mean that pupils have a calm and orderly start to the school day. However, there are inconsistencies in how well staff model, and pupils adhere to, the school's behaviour

policies at social times. For example, transitions from the playground to lessons are slow and some pupils do not behave respectfully. Staff sometimes do not address this. At lunchtimes, some poor behaviour is not identified or addressed. Pupils recognise this. Leaders do not have sufficient oversight. As a result, some behaviour incidents go unreported or reoccur.

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

Pupils learn about the 'Swanage Way' right from the start. This helps them form well-established routines. Everyone is greeted with a warm welcome from staff. They are on hand for anyone who needs support. This ensures that pupils feel safe and included in the school community. Pupils settle to the day quickly and relish the opportunities to practise and apply their prior learning in early morning activities. Pupils demonstrate what the school calls 'marvellous manners' when speaking individually with adults.

The curriculum teaches pupils a breadth of knowledge across subjects. Pupils gain the essential knowledge they need. They are well prepared for their next stage of education. Where staff have consistently high expectations of pupils, they respond well in lessons and persevere with their learning diligently. However, there are occasions when teaching does not provide pupils with the most complex knowledge as soon as they are ready. When this happens, a minority of pupils can suffer short-term lapses in concentration.

Pupils' experiences of lunchtimes are mixed. Many do enjoy playing with their peers. However, staff do not consistently identify when pupils fall out, or their behaviour falls short of the school's expectations. As a result, behaviour incidents or disagreements can be left unresolved.

Staff champion pupils' leadership skills, for example being part of the school council or being a reading buddy with younger pupils. Pupils experience a range of wider activities to broaden their horizons and bolster curriculum learning. For example, pupils showed genuine excitement and interest in the visiting 'science dome'. Pupils take part in a local arts week, display their work in local galleries and take part in musical productions. Choir club is a favourite for many. Pupils benefit from music lessons and take part in a range of sporting activities. This develops their confidence well.

Next steps

- Leaders need to ensure that all staff and pupils adhere to the school's behaviour policies and expectations, so that transitions between social and learning time are consistently effective and all pupils behave well at lunchtimes
- Leaders need to ensure that teachers use their checks on pupils' learning effectively so that teaching builds on what pupils know and they gain the depth of teaching they need to secure the most complex subject knowledge when they are ready.
- Leaders need to have stringent oversight of the school's performance and use detailed and insightful analysis, including relating to pupils' behaviour, to evaluate all aspects of

the effectiveness of the school.

About this inspection

This school is part of Coastal Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Howieson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Copsey.

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, the deputy headteacher and a range of other staff. An inspector met with the CEO, a trustee and 3 members of the local governance committee and 2 members of the central team from the trust.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

There is a breakfast club.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Adam Burt

Lead inspector:
Julie Carrington, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Jo Walker, Ofsted Inspector
Jyotsna Paranjape, 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

222
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: 268

School capacity

210
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)

16.92%
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

4.50%
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

9.91%

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)	47%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		61%	

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)	63%	75%	Below
2023/24		74%	

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
2024/25 (final)	60%	72%	Below
2023/24		72%	

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)	57%	74%	Below
2023/24		73%	

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
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	10%	47%	Below
2023/24		46%	

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)	40%	63%	Below
2023/24		62%	

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)	30%	59%	Below
2023/24		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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	10%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		59%	

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)	10%	69%	-59 pp
2023/24		67%	

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)	40%	81%	-41 pp
2023/24		80%	

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)	30%	78%	-48 pp
2023/24		78%	

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	10%	81%	-71 pp
2023/24		79%	

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)	5.3%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.9%	5.5%	Above

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)	17.3%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	19.3%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.4%	14.6%	Above

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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