



# Francis Baily Primary School

Address: Skillman Drive, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 4GG

Unique reference number (URN): 147273

## 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.

## Expected standard

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Overall, pupils attend well. Leaders have high standards for attendance. They monitor attendance patterns and work closely with parents and carers to identify and remove barriers. Leaders' approaches help all pupils to attend more regularly. For example, the free breakfast club is popular and well attended. Leaders are taking appropriate action to secure improvement in attendance of some disadvantaged pupils. There is notable improvement for individuals.

Pupils behave well. Leaders have taken determined action to improve behaviour. As a result, staff expectations are high and school routines are clear. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They have positive and respectful relationships with staff. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and give attention to their learning. Occasionally, where teaching is less effective, pupils become distracted. Pupils play happily during social times. Leaders provide a range of activities. This helps pupils to keep active and play purposefully. Leaders make adaptations to support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with their behaviour. Personalised programmes help pupils to regulate their emotions. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and bullying is rare. They know that adults will listen and respond quickly if they have any worries.

### Early years

Expected standard 

The early years is happy and safe. Staff build relationships with children and their parents and carers, quickly. Consequently, staff know what children need to thrive. As a result, children get off to a positive start. They are generally well prepared for Year 1.

The curriculum enables pupils to develop knowledge, skills and interests across all 7 areas of learning. Children apply newly acquired knowledge and skills during their independent learning.

Staff prioritise core skills. They regularly read stories to children. As a result, children develop reading skills and gain pleasure from books. The curriculum also provides children with plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn and practise writing. Staff model how to write neatly and accurately. This helps children to become independent early writers. Precision teaching also helps children to close gaps in phonics.

Staff identify children who may need additional support quickly. They put in place extra help to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing. Staff 'meet and greets' help children to transition into school when they arrive as smoothly as possible.

Children are confident and resilient. They focus on learning tasks carefully. For example, children learn to count accurately and recognise numbers while playing snakes and ladders.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. Leaders identify barriers to learning swiftly. Staff in the early years get to know children quickly. Staff visit previous settings and work closely with parents and carers to better understand any emerging need that they may have. This helps leaders to put in place support early.

Leaders support pupils with SEND effectively. Adaptations and adjustments are generally implemented by skilled staff, appropriately. This helps to reduce barriers and allows pupils to access learning alongside their peers. Leaders have invested in staff training to deliver specific interventions in school. Consequently, pupils can access provision such as emotional literacy support more quickly.

Pupils with more complex needs receive a personalised programme. Part-time timetables and alternative provision contribute to this, where appropriate. Leaders monitor the impact of strategies closely and act in the best interest of pupils, consistently. As a result, these pupils make steady progress. Leaders work in close collaboration with external agencies. This ensures that pupils receive the support they need to belong and thrive. Leaders understand the needs of pupils who are disadvantaged. They allocate additional funding appropriately. Strategies are evidence-informed and monitored well.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are effective, ambitious and aspirational. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their strategic plans are robust. They prioritise actions appropriately and focus on sustainable change. As a result, areas that leaders are focusing on, such as the curriculum and teaching, are improving.

Governors are committed. They care deeply about the school. Governors share leaders' vision for ongoing improvement. They provide support and challenge to ensure leaders are effective. For example, governors carefully review the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Trustees ensure that statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. It is too soon to see the full impact of recent changes to trust strategy and the leadership of the board of trustees, however.

Leaders consider professional learning thoughtfully. Training aligns with school priorities and focuses on high-quality teaching. Leaders focus on securing knowledge before moving on. This ensures that staff can use what they have learned to support pupils more effectively. Staff also complete national training programmes and participate in partnership moderation.

Leaders respond to staff feedback. They take meaningful steps to address workload and support wellbeing. For example, leaders have recently adapted planning expectations and removed unnecessary administration. Consequently, staff feel supported and cared for. Leaders form collaborative partnerships with parents and carers. Staff in the early years get to know children quickly. Relationships are established through ongoing workshops and events. For example, parents learn how to use art to support their children with mathematics. As a result, parents describe Francis Baily as a friendly and caring school.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The personal development and wellbeing programme is comprehensive. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from the curriculum and wider offer.

The curriculum is broad. It is responsive to the needs of pupils and the local context. Pupils generally can recall a wide variety of learning. Pupils know how to keep safe near the railway and how to identify risks online. Older pupils talk about their bodies and healthy relationships, confidently. They know what to do if they feel uncomfortable. British values are embedded across the curriculum. Pupils learn about democracy by voting for pupil leadership responsibilities. Pupils visit different places of worship, such as a gurdwara in Year 3. This helps pupils to learn about people who have faiths and beliefs that may be different from their own.

Wider opportunities are extensive. Extra-curricular clubs are popular and well-attended. Leaders prioritise lunchtime clubs to ensure that pupils participate fully. This enables pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to develop their talents and interests. Educational outings and talks from visitors complement the taught curriculum. Residential visits help pupils to develop teamwork skills. Visitors from a local bank teach pupils about financial management. Themed learning days help pupils to learn what life was like as an evacuee in the Second World War or as a citizen of ancient Roman. Pupils are proud to be 'care ambassadors'. These pupils look out for moments of kindness and recognise them.

Pastoral support for pupils experiencing vulnerabilities is effective. Support plans are tailored to individual needs. Leaders draw on knowledge from external professionals where appropriate. The school also analyses the impact of the support that it provides, systematically.

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## **Needs attention**

### **Achievement**

**Needs attention** 

Not all pupils achieve as well as they could. Some improvements to the curriculum and teaching are recent. Therefore, pupils' attainment in national tests are variable over time. Areas that leaders have focused on, such as reading and the early years, have improved. Pupils secure their phonics knowledge and learn to read effectively.

Pupils' writing is less secure. While handwriting has generally improved, some pupils have gaps in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. This means that some pupils do not write as well as they could. Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not secure the skills they need in mathematics. This is, in part, because they are not as fluent as they should be in key arithmetic and problem-solving skills.

Pupils can recall a range of information from the broader curriculum. Recent changes to the curriculum and teaching are not yet embedded, however. As a result, pupils cannot apply

their learning and build connections. This means that, currently, not all pupils are as well prepared for their next steps as they could be.

## Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers' explanations are not as clear as they could be and learning is not consistently well matched to pupils' starting points. This means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not learn as well as they could. Leaders are taking the right actions to address this. Impact can be seen in some areas, such as phonics and the early years. It is too soon to see the impact of their work across all areas of the curriculum, however.

Core skills in English and mathematics are prioritised. Phonics is taught consistently well. Pupils who have gaps in reading are supported to catch up. In writing, pupils learn to communicate their ideas clearly. The teaching of handwriting has improved, some pupils' errors in spelling and punctuation are not addressed consistently. Mathematics teaching is uneven. Leaders are making changes to the curriculum and introducing a new calculation policy to address this. This work is at an early stage, however.

Teachers generally make appropriate adaptations to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some pupils receive a personalised programme. This helps them to learn alongside their peers and make progress from their starting points.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have made careful adaptations to meet the needs of pupils. Staff are generally well equipped to deliver the curriculum. This is because leaders prioritise training that focuses on teaching and learning.

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

Pupils arrive happily to this welcoming and friendly school. Leaders and staff care about the pupils here. They know them as individuals. Most pupils attend school regularly. Some disadvantaged pupils' attendance has been below the national average over time, however. This means that some pupils miss valuable learning opportunities.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. It is sequenced appropriately so that pupils learn in small steps. Teaching is inconsistent, however. In some subjects, such as reading, teaching is secure. In other subjects, teachers' explanations are sometimes unclear. Tasks are not precisely matched to pupils' starting points. This means that some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils behave well. They listen to adults and follow instructions. Pupils generally focus during lessons. They enjoy learning. Where teaching is not as well matched to their needs, some pupils become distracted. Pupils play well together during social times. They benefit from the range of activities on offer, such as construction, drawing and ball games. Bullying is rare at Francis Baily. Pupils of all ages know that adults will respond quickly if there is a problem. Discrimination is not tolerated here.

Pupils receive a personal development programme that is thoughtfully tailored to their needs. For example, older pupils receive visits from the local police to learn more about using mobile phones safely. Pupils understand how to keep safe online and offline. They can describe what makes a healthy relationship. They know what to do if a friendship is unhealthy. Pupils are confident and resilient. They communicate effectively with adults. They benefit from wider opportunities that teach leadership skills such as the eco-council and house captains. They develop skills and interests through a wide range of clubs. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that their plans to improve and develop the curriculum and teaching are implemented and embedded consistently.
  - Leaders should ensure that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve consistently well, particularly in core subjects of English and mathematics.
  - Leaders should continue to develop their pupil attendance strategy, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that recent improvements can be built upon and sustained over time.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Equinox Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is currently run by an interim CEO/ executive headteacher, Max Gayler, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graham Curren.

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 other school leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with the interim CEO, executive headteacher, the chair of trustees, members of the local governing board, representatives of external agencies and staff.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new headteacher and senior leadership team are in place.

Headteacher: Elizabeth Hobbs

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**Lead inspector:**

Anneka Fisher, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**


Justin Bartlett, Ofsted Inspector

Clare Morgan, Ofsted Inspector

Tina Thomas, 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**

**533**

Well 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: 272

**School capacity**

**567**

Well 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)**

**17.82%**

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**

**2.81%**

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: 3.5%

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**16.89%**

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**

**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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	60%	Close to average

### 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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	64%	72%	Below
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	76%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	53%	72%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	61%	71%	Below

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	73%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	67%	74%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	64%	73%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	74%	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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	27%	46%	Below
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	32%	47%	Below

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	8%	46%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35%	44%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	52%	62%	Below
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	58%	63%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	50%	62%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	47%	60%	Below

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	38%	59%	Below
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	53%	59%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	17%	58%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35%	58%	Below

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	40%	60%	Below
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	37%	61%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	33%	59%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	47%	59%	Close to average

## **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	27%	68%	-41 pp
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	32%	69%	-38 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	8%	67%	-59 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35%	66%	-31 pp

## **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	52%	80%	-28 pp
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	58%	81%	-23 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	50%	80%	-30 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	47%	78%	-31 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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	38%	78%	-40 pp
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	53%	78%	-26 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	17%	78%	-61 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	35%	77%	-42 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	40%	80%	-40 pp
<b>2024/25 (final)</b>	37%	81%	-44 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	33%	79%	-46 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	47%	79%	-32 pp

## 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)	5.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	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)	14.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%	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.

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