

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Address: Primate Road, PO14 4RP

Unique reference number (URN): 137403

Inspection report: 6 January 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils' attendance is a clear strength. Pupils love coming to school as the atmosphere is so calm and friendly. Where pupils' absence is a concern, leaders work highly effectively with families to address this.

Behaviour across the school is highly positive, underpinned by clear routines and unwavering expectations. Pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to their learning. They are highly attentive in class and are eager to learn. Pupils' mature attitudes are replicated in their everyday manner, where doors are held for others, and smiles and pleasant greetings are aplenty. Pupils have a natural, intrinsic care for others. They respond effectively to the school's various positive behaviour approaches, such as 'bucket filling' to encourage pupils to celebrate positive actions of others. Behaviour issues are very rare. When they do occur, pupils are rightly confident that staff will resolve issues quickly. Staff carefully track any friendship issues, and put swift interventions into action to prevent escalation. Leaders ensure that strategies to support any pupil who needs extra help with behaviour is effective. They utilise the advice from external services when appropriate. For example, individualised approaches, such as behaviour books and closer involvement from senior leaders, have improved outcomes for pupils with complex needs.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have an unwavering ambition to reduce barriers and improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils at the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. It also includes others with potential barriers to learning at the school such as young carers or those in a services family. The pupil premium strategy is effectively embedded, with leaders ensuring it is carefully checked for its high effectiveness.

Leaders identify the individual academic or pastoral needs of pupils who need additional support with precision. They ensure that staff know what to do and how to help. Many staff are proactive rather than reactive in ensuring they have the right, high-quality training to support pupils effectively. Leaders provide strategies that are adapted in a timely fashion to meet individual needs. This ensures pupils receive targeted support at the right time that makes a sustained difference. Adjustments to a pupil's individual provision are regular and respond to a pupil's changing needs.

Overall, leaders' actions are highly focused on the individual pupils, resulting in improved engagement, confidence and outcomes for the pupils who need it most.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils at the school truly value the excellent opportunities they get to develop their personal development and wellbeing. The school delivers a highly structured and impactful personal, social and health curriculum that pupils learn and demonstrate with a natural assurance. This includes elements around relationships education and a strong understanding of the

fundamental British values. The curriculum is dynamic, responsive and deeply embedded in the school's ethos. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, benefit greatly.

The cornerstone of school's personal development programme is the school's work on emotional literacy, which begins in the early years. It is regularly revisited throughout the school to build self-regulation and emotional awareness. Pupils appreciate the time they are given to self-reflect on their emotions. Those who need more support are given what they need by well trained and compassionate staff. The impact of this pastoral work on pupils' personal development is clear. Pupils demonstrate confidence and independence, including more vulnerable learners who have overcome anxiety and now thrive in new experiences. For example, the school offers increasingly challenging residential experiences so that all pupils find a way to participate in each opportunity. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils have at least the same opportunities as their peers, such as funded opportunities for music tuition.

Leaders place a significant focus on purposeful outdoor learning. Clear and sequenced curriculums for the farm and forest schools help develop pupils' spirituality and appreciation of the natural world, as well as wider skills of cooperation and care. Economic well-being is addressed through topics on money, jobs and aspirational role models, while former pupils return to share successes. This reinforces a strong sense of community. Pupils develop a strong understanding and respect for others, which helps develop pupils' empathy and appreciation of their responsibilities in society.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. They typically achieve very well in national assessments, including for disadvantaged pupils, by the time they leave for secondary school. Leaders have made effective changes to improve pupils' writing to increase the quality of writing further across the school. This work is well on its way to improving outcomes in writing even further. Children in early years achieve national averages for a good level of development, and leaders aspire for them to achieve even more, given their starting points.

Across the school, pupils become engrossed in the different topics they learn in the wider curriculum. They love learning about history or different artists and know many very interesting facts. However, they do not always learn and remember the key, subject-specific knowledge that will help them from unit to unit. For example, pupils remember plenty of interesting information about the artists they have studied, but are less confident remembering the different artistic techniques they have practised in the past.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They ensure teachers have the necessary expertise required for

the subjects and age of pupils they teach. The curriculum is well planned for each subject, with clear end points and logical sequencing that builds on pupils' prior learning. Teaching is effective, informed by teachers' knowledge of pupils' needs and approaches to how pupils learn best. Some lessons, however, focus too heavily on learning topic facts. This means pupils can miss out on fully developing longer term knowledge and skills in each subject.

All pupils at the early stages of learning to read are taught through a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Leaders and staff are alert to any pupil who is not securing essential early knowledge in communication, reading, writing or mathematics. Staff are well trained to check pupils' understanding and adapt teaching or the curriculum where needed. As a result, staff make appropriate adaptations to ensure pupils with a disadvantage or vulnerability experience the same curriculum in a way that suits them best. This leads to a confidence in all classrooms where all pupils feel they are learning the curriculum successfully.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious to ensure children get a very successful start to their education, working closely with parents and carers. The provision for 2- and 3-year-olds is effective, including appropriate spaces for intimate care and sleeping. Disadvantaged children, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children with other barriers to learning are successfully included throughout the school day.

The early years curriculum is carefully designed to identify and sequence key knowledge. Staff in both the pre-school and in Reception ensure that the curriculum is generally taught well. Leaders have ensured there is a focus on developing children's articulation, vocabulary acquisition and phonics. By the end of the Reception Year, most children use the phonics sounds they have learned very well. However, while staff in the early years provide opportunities for developing children's early writing skills, some of the writing opportunities that teachers provide do not always allow pupils to extend their writing skills further. Adult interactions with the children are invariably positive, but staff occasionally miss out on developing a child's learning in the moment. As a result, they do not develop as quickly as they could in all areas of the early years curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school's vision, which is rooted in its religious ethos, underpins a commitment to developing the whole child both academically and pastorally. Leaders, including governors, know their school very well indeed. They have a clear understanding of its many strengths, as well as the areas that would benefit from further development. Leaders welcome external support and advice, and consider this effectively within their knowledge of what they feel works best at St Anthony's. As leaders know the children so well, the decisions they make are invariably in the best interests of pupils. The school's strong approach to inclusion means that staff know the needs of the more disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and do all they can to give them the provision needed.

The school's governance is effective. Governors expect every child to be nurtured and valued. They provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders. Governors have high expectations for what pupils should achieve, including children in the early years. They

successfully fulfil their statutory responsibilities, such as those around safeguarding, finance and staff well-being. As a result, staff are universally positive and proud to work at the school. They appreciate recent decisions to remove unnecessary tasks. Staff also value the opportunities they are given to develop their professional knowledge and skills, both collectively and as individuals.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership and wider staff. They appreciate that the school's ethos and vision is enacted and many say they feel lucky to send their children to St Anthony's.

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

Pupils at St Anthony's learn in a safe, highly inclusive and ambitious environment where every child is valued and supported to thrive. From the start in early years, pupils experience high-quality care. The school's strong ethos of promoting forgiveness and positive relationships radiates through the school.

Pupils achieve very well in their learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. They benefit from a broad and balanced wider curriculum where their knowledge and skills are developing well. The curriculum is enriched with opportunities that extend beyond the classroom, including outdoor learning, music tuition and residential trips. These experiences are carefully considered to build confidence and independence, ensuring pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of other disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds, can participate fully.

Behaviour is a clear strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of respect and manners, and are sensitive to the needs of others. They are safe and know that any issues, including bullying, are dealt with swiftly and fairly. Attendance is very high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and the positive atmosphere of the school.

Pupils develop highly effective emotional literacy and resilience through a well-structured personal development programme. Pupils thoroughly appreciate the pastoral support they receive when they need it. Initiatives to support pupils who are young carers or a member of a service family are well embedded. The school has developed highly influential buddy pairings between older and younger pupils, as well as appointing 'peer mediators' to deal with any minor friendship issues. All this helps to develop pupils' empathy and understanding of their responsibilities as individuals. Pupils engage in charity work, cultural events and faith-based activities, building a strong sense of community and social awareness.

Pupils leave for secondary school as academically successful, emotionally secure and socially responsible individuals.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years take every opportunity to develop pupils' learning in a timely manner, including in early writing.
 - Leaders should analyse more closely how well pupils' disciplinary knowledge and skills has been learned and remembered in every curriculum subject across the school.
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About this inspection

The school is a single academy trust. It is the only school in The Catholic Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Torion Bowles.

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 met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the trust and governing board, a representative from the diocese and an external educational representative.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The last section 48 inspection was carried out by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate in January 2024.

Since the last inspection all members of the school's leadership team are new to post.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery for 2-, 3- and 4-year-old children.

Headteacher: Katrina Straker

Lead inspector:

Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Linda Appleby, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Bateman, 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

215

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

222

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)

4.19%

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

5.12%

Above 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

12.09%

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	76%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	76%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	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	85%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	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	89%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	85%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	94%	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	41%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	76%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	78%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	71%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	41%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	76%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	78%	80%	-2 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	59%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	71%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	67%	79%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	5.9%	Below

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)	4.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	16.2%	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.

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