

St Aidan's Catholic Primary School

Address: Adswold Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 7XR

Unique reference number (URN): 104463

Inspection report: 3 February 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are central to the work of the school. Pupils learn the knowledge they need for life in modern Britain in age-appropriate ways. This includes learning how to solve moral dilemmas and how to build healthy relationships. Pupils reflect with care on their choices and have a detailed understanding of right and wrong. Older pupils learn how to keep safe online and to monitor their own digital footprint.

The personal development programme is well designed, highly effective and shaped to meet the needs of the school community. Leaders keep this programme under review and make ongoing improvements. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They visit places of worship. Pupils develop their understanding about the characteristics that are protected by law and fundamental British values. For example, pupils learn about respect and tolerance.

Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities, including as play leaders and house captains. They value the chance to share their views and influence school life. Pupils learn about democracy in practical ways. For example, in the early years, children vote for their class stories each day. Pupils use the whole-school polling station to choose who will take on pupil leadership roles.

A wide range of opportunities provide pupils with rich experiences beyond school. Pupils develop character, resilience and deepen their learning. For example, pupils speak positively about class trips to the zoo, wildlife park and the Year 6 residential. Pupils take part in a range of opportunities to develop their talents, interests and cultural understanding. They attend after-school sports clubs, learn musical instruments and sing to live audiences. Leaders have a clear oversight of pupils' participation in enrichment activities. They make adjustments to ensure that pupils have full access to all opportunities. Pupils who face disadvantage benefit from the personal development programme alongside their peers.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed the curriculum so that it is ambitious and tackles any previous weaknesses. They have set out precisely what pupils need to learn. This ensures that teachers can build pupils' knowledge and skills progressively. Staff are trained to deliver the curriculum effectively. Most staff apply these approaches consistently. For example, staff give pupils regular chances to revisit earlier learning and show what they know.

Leaders have made developing pupils' communication and reading skills a priority. Staff teach phonics effectively through a well-structured programme. They promote the joy of reading and opportunities to widen vocabulary. As a result, most pupils read with fluency and enthusiasm.

Leaders have systems to check on the quality of the curriculum and teaching. Teachers review pupils' progress, making sure that they gain the essential knowledge in mathematics and writing. The recent improvements to the teaching of mathematics mean pupils learn well in their lessons. However, some older pupils do not have sufficient number fluency and continue to need targeted support so they can access more complex learning. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive timely support when needed to access learning effectively. For example, teachers check pupils' understanding and make careful adaptations to the curriculum as needed.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders make sure that children get off to the best start to their school journey. They plan transition into the early years with care. Leaders ensure that children begin school with their starting points well understood. Staff nurture positive relationships with parents and carers to get to know each child well. They use this knowledge to shape the learning experiences. Staff ensure that children feel safe and secure from the very start. Children settle well and develop positive learning behaviours that set them up well for future learning.

Leaders have strengthened the early years curriculum. There is a sharp focus on developing children's language, early reading and vocabulary. Staff model this effectively and develop children's communication skills well. They foster children's love of rhymes and words through carefully chosen books. Staff ensure that children develop secure early reading knowledge. Children achieve well in these areas of learning.

Staff work proactively with parents and external professionals to understand any barriers that children face. Disadvantaged children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access all learning opportunities through the support they receive. By the end of the Reception Year, children are typically well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs quickly when they join the school and as their needs change. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive effective pastoral support, bespoke interventions and adaptations to teaching. This ensures that pupils participate in all aspects of school life. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers in the classroom and enjoy the wider experiences the school provides.

Staff share leaders' aspirations for pupils to succeed. They receive effective training on how to tailor their approaches to meet pupils' individual needs. Staff adapt activities so that pupils typically learn well. This includes successfully using additional funding to make a positive difference to disadvantaged pupils' achievement. This has been most effective in supporting pupils to learn to read.

Positive relationships with families, professionals and external agencies help leaders to further enhance the support that pupils receive. Leaders regularly review the support in place to ensure that strategies are adapted to meet pupils' evolving needs and build their

independence. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils attend school more regularly and achieve well across the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, want the best for the pupils, staff and families at St Aidan's. They take a collaborative approach to improve the school. Leaders have refined the curriculum and strengthened the school's inclusive practice. These changes have had a positive impact on pupils' experiences.

Leaders have a clear understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs to improve. They use this knowledge to further develop the school with precision. Leaders regularly check that these actions are having the intended impact. They consider the impact of any changes on staff wellbeing and workload. Staff value the care and support they receive from leaders. Leaders ensure that staff have access to high-quality professional learning and training opportunities. This supports staff to build their expertise.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the school. They ensure that they have the expertise to fulfil their roles effectively. Governors' skills allow them to provide targeted support and challenge to leaders. This includes how they gain assurance of the impact of leaders' actions to improve the school's curriculum. They also check how resources are used across the school to ensure that pupils benefit from the decisions they make. Leaders and governors build constructive relationships with parents and carers and the wider community. They promote a collective responsibility to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care, succeed.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

For the past 3 years, pupils' achievement in published outcomes has been below the national average at the end of key stage 2. Older pupils have not secured the knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, over time, they have developed considerable gaps in their knowledge. This makes learning harder across other subjects. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This means that pupils have not been well prepared for secondary education. While leaders are tackling the weaknesses, some older pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have made changes to ensure that pupils learn the essential knowledge they need. For example, younger pupils learn phonics sounds quickly so that they learn to read confidently and fluently. Pupils who are disadvantaged, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally make suitable progress from their starting points. Nonetheless, recent curriculum changes have had limited time to have an impact on all areas of the curriculum and in all year groups.

Leaders rightly remain concerned about levels of absence. Although attendance is steadily improving overall, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, still miss too much school. Leaders have sharpened their focus on ensuring that pupils attend more regularly. They track reasons for absence closely and provide targeted support to help families overcome barriers. Leaders make sure pupils and families understand why regular attendance matters. They celebrate high attendance. This has reduced absence for a small number of pupils. However, leaders' actions are not yet reaching all groups of pupils to ensure sustained improvement.

Leaders have created a calm and nurturing environment. They set clear routines and have high expectations for pupils. Pupils live up to these and behave well. From the early years, children learn the school rules and how to manage their emotions. In lessons, pupils try their best to stay focused and manage any distractions well. Positive and trusting relationships underpin the school's approach. Staff apply the school rules fairly. They gently guide pupils with care to make positive choices. When pupils struggle to manage their feelings, staff provide timely support. Pupils play together harmoniously at playtimes. They show genuine kindness towards each other. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with incidents quickly.

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

St Aidan's is a nurturing and inclusive school. Staff know pupils well. Pupils feel happy and secure because staff provide high levels of care. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Pupils with SEND feel they belong and take part in all aspects of school life because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils are welcomed warmly by staff each morning. They settle into learning quickly, receiving help from staff when needed. Pupils enjoy school. However, some pupils do not attend regularly. This makes it harder for them to achieve well. The school's values shape daily life. Pupils are respectful and care for one another. They behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils say bullying rarely happens. They trust staff to help with any worries.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. They learn phonics well and read with confidence. However, the achievement of older pupils is too variable across the curriculum. Leaders are tackling the weaknesses in the curriculum, but gaps in older pupils' learning persist. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in national tests and are not well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils benefit from a range of rich opportunities to prepare them for the future. For example, the careers week helps pupils explore future pathways and raise their aspirations. Pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. They understand age-appropriate risks in the community and how to protect themselves, including online. Through the curriculum they learn about the importance of managing their own mental health. Older pupils discuss ways

they can keep calm and stay positive with maturity. They fully understand how their school prepares them for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that recent actions to strengthen the teaching of mathematics are fully embedded so that all pupils secure number facts and apply them with increasing fluency.
 - Leaders should ensure that gaps in older pupils' foundational knowledge are addressed quickly so that they can access the curriculum and achieve well in national tests.
 - Leaders should continue to implement and evaluate their attendance strategy, further strengthening their work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and achieve well.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dee Denton.

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, governors, and representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character.

The school is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and had its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, in June 2023.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Kathryn Fitzsimmons

Lead inspector:

Emily Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sue Farrimond, Ofsted Inspector

Lee Comber, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

216

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

243

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)

42.41%

Above 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

4.17%

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

18.52%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above 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	43%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	48%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	60%	Below

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	66%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	69%	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.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	64%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	58%	71%	Below

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	51%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	52%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	73%	Below

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	30%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	47%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	27%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	12%	44%	Below

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	55%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	59%	60%	Close to average

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	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	58%	Close to average

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	40%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	53%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	29%	59%	Below

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	30%	68%	-38 pp
2024/25 (revised)	47%	69%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	67%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	12%	66%	-55 pp

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	55%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (revised)	68%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	80%	-52 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	78%	-19 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.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	78%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	78%	-32 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	77%	-30 pp

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	40%	80%	-39 pp
2024/25 (revised)	53%	81%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	79%	-43 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	29%	79%	-50 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 (2 term)	6.5%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.2%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.9%	5.9%	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
2024/25 (2 term)	22.7%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	28.7%	16.2%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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

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

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

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

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright