

St Francis Xavier's Primary School

Address: Venns Lane, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 1DT

Unique reference number (URN): 116884

Inspection report: 14 April 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 ●

Leaders have established robust systems to monitor and improve attendance. They work closely with families to understand barriers and provide highly effective and timely support. For example, they make referrals to the school nurse to help pupils with health needs. This results in very low rates of persistent absence. Attendance is consistently above national averages, and persistent absence is consistently below national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages for all pupils. Although attendance is consistently high, leaders remain tenacious in continuing to ensure that every pupil attends as often as possible.

Pupils consistently behave very well. They show highly positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are free from disruption. This is because staff implement the relational behavioural policy effectively and pupils understand how to make positive choices. For pupils that need them, staff implement reasonable adjustments well, such as short breaks between tasks and co-regulation. This helps pupils focus on their work and manage distractions. As a result, pupils, including those with barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, listen well and work hard.

Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils say staff address any issues effectively. Leaders have created an environment where any discrimination is immediately and thoroughly dealt with.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children flourish in a language-rich environment. They frequently engage in high-quality interactions with adults across the day. This enables them to practise learned vocabulary and language structures. Staff work tirelessly to maximise these opportunities. Where children are less confident to engage, staff support them to join in. This means that these children grow in confidence and thrive.

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-structured curriculum that enables children to build their knowledge across the 7 areas of learning. Staff create highly purposeful learning opportunities with clear outcomes. As a result, children progress really well in all areas. Staff teach important reading, writing and mathematical knowledge effectively. Children have lots of opportunities to practise applying this knowledge. This enables them to achieve very well.

Staff care deeply for the children. There are highly positive relationships across the provision, reflected in the respectful, cooperative way in which children interact and play. Children are happy and manage their emotions consistently well. This is because leaders and staff have created a calm, caring and supportive environment where children feel safe. When children face barriers to their learning or wellbeing, staff ensure that very effective adaptations are consistently implemented. As a result, these children progress rapidly from their starting points.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have established a highly inclusive ethos. They ensure that pupils feel valued and are included in all aspects of school life. On entry to the school, leaders swiftly assess children to identify their specific needs. This enables leaders to design very effective, precise support plans from the earliest opportunity. Staff implement these plans really well. They confidently respond to pupils' emerging needs and adapt support as needed. As a result, provision is responsive, tailored and timely. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access learning, progress well and maintain positive wellbeing.

Leaders evaluate the impact of additional help provided for pupils effectively and adjust support as needed. To supplement high-quality in-class support, they ensure effective adaptations and reasonable adjustments are implemented for pupils that need them. This means that pupils with SEND progress really well from their starting points and secure important reading, writing and mathematical knowledge.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and feel that they belong. This is because leaders spend funding for these pupils effectively and staff implement the school's strategy for supporting these pupils very well. Leaders ensure that those pupils known (or previously known) to social care receive effective support in school and out of school. Leaders work in partnership with families, helping them access appropriate support from external agencies. This ensures pupils facing additional challenges are happy and ready to learn.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils secure important knowledge in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics very well. They achieve highly in national examinations and far exceed national averages. In the Year 1 phonics check and the Year 4 multiplication check, a consistently high proportion of pupils achieve the appropriate standard. By the end of key stage 2, a very high percentage of pupils consistently attain the expected standard and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils make better progress in these core subjects than other pupils nationally. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points. At the end of each phase, pupils are, therefore, well prepared for their next steps. Although pupils develop appropriate knowledge in other subjects across the wider curriculum overall, they do not gain the same depth of knowledge in these subjects as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established an effective curriculum. They have tailored it to their unique context, which makes it interesting and relevant for pupils. For example, pupils learn about changes in land use in Hereford and the economic implications for the local area. The

curriculum builds on knowledge and subject-specific skills over time, such as mapwork in geography and enquiry in science. This means that pupils have access to the knowledge and experiences needed to prepare them for their next stage.

The teaching of the curriculum is effective across the school. Staff create opportunities for pupils to practise using vocabulary and language structures across subjects, both in writing and verbally. They deliver the phonics programme highly effectively. Leaders ensure that any pupils who have not secured important phonics knowledge access timely support. This means that pupils catch up quickly. While the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is typically highly effective, teaching is more variable across the wider curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those with other barriers, such as those pupils who speak English as an additional language, progress well as the result of well-planned adaptations to work. They access learning successfully.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school well. They have a secure understanding of strengths and areas for development. Because they have high aspirations for pupils, leaders strive for continual improvement. Every action taken is always in pupils' best interests. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known (or previously known) to social care are at the heart of leaders' decision-making. Leaders ensure these pupils are consistently well supported in all areas of school life. As a result, these pupils thrive.

Governors understand their roles and support the school well. They are well informed and check the impact of leaders' actions effectively. Like leaders, they care passionately about the community. Governors fulfil their statutory duties fully.

Leaders have established a professional and caring environment. They are outward facing, and staff work regularly with other schools to learn, share and develop their practice. This supplements an effective professional learning programme, which considers both whole-school priorities and individual needs. Staff take ownership for the direction of their own professional learning, and leaders support them with this. As a result, staff have the expertise they need to perform their roles effectively. Leaders ensure that workload and wellbeing are carefully considered. Staff appreciate this.

Leaders have forged close partnerships with parents and carers. Feedback from parents is highly positive. This is because leaders resolve issues quickly and support families well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have thought carefully about the personal development programme. They have created an offer that is bespoke and tailored to the needs and aspirations of their pupils. The impact of this is clear in pupils' behaviour. Pupils are courteous, friendly, reflective and highly respectful. Leaders provide many opportunities to contribute positively to the community, such as visiting care homes to plant sunflowers and read to residents. Pupils learn about local, national and global issues, often fundraising to support relevant causes. This builds

compassion and helps to create the caring environment that is highly evident across the school.

Pupils understand fundamental British values and live these out across school life. There are opportunities to vote for 'pupil leaders' and learn about significant figures that paved the way for modern society. Pupils learn about different faiths, beliefs and cultures. They visit places of worship. As a result, they are tolerant and have an appreciation and respect for difference.

The school offers a range of clubs catering to pupils' interests. They ensure that those who may be disadvantaged attend well. Leaders make reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can attend, such as through being accompanied by a trusted adult. This means that the offer is a genuine entitlement for all. This is also the case with trips. Leaders select trips carefully to complement learning in the curriculum, such as visiting a cathedral when learning about Anglo-Saxons.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline. They understand how to be a good friend, but also how to set boundaries and maintain healthy relationships. However, in some areas of personal, social, health and economic education, such as staying physically healthy, pupils' knowledge is less detailed.

Pastoral support is effective. Leaders draw on external and internal expertise to ensure that pupils access the right support at the right time. This ensures that the school swiftly addresses barriers to pupils' wellbeing.

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

Pupils flourish at St. Francis Xavier's Primary School. The school's values and ethos shine through in all areas of school life. The mission of 'Love one another as I have loved you' is lived out by pupils and adults alike. This results in a compassionate, warm and welcoming environment where pupils thrive.

Pupils achieve extremely well in national tests. They enjoy their lessons and have positive relationships with the adults that work with them. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils secure the important knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage. Younger children in early years make rapid progress. Across the wider curriculum, pupils develop knowledge across the full range of subjects, although in some areas this is not as detailed as it is in reading, writing and mathematics. Where pupils face barriers to learning, they access the support they need to succeed.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is consistently excellent. This means pupils can work in an environment that is highly conducive to learning. They listen well and show sustained focus. The school's approach to securing pupils' positive behaviour and the inclusive ethos ensures that pupils understand how to manage their emotions and make positive choices. This begins with the youngest children in early years and continues throughout school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and always addressed effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe.

Leaders have created an environment where every pupil belongs. No matter what the barrier, every pupil receives the support they need to access the full range of opportunities available to them. Pupils learn and play together cooperatively. Older pupils are excellent role models. A carefully planned programme of clubs, trips and leadership roles means that pupils participate in a broad curriculum that goes far beyond the academic. The 'immersion room' provides virtual experiences that enrich pupils' understanding of the world.

Pupils attend well. They like school and respect the adults that work with them. Leaders recognise pupils as individuals, so they feel valued. When pupils leave, they are very well prepared to succeed in the next stage of their life.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed teaching approaches so that there is consistently highly effective teaching across the school.
 - Leaders and staff should ensure that pupils develop a detailed knowledge and understanding across the wider curriculum, including the personal, social, health and economic curriculum.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Paul Williams.

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, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, assistant headteacher and other leaders during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The headteacher took up her post since the last inspection.

At the time of the inspection, there had been an increase in pupil premium numbers to 7.48%.

Headteacher: Elizabeth Christopherson

Lead inspector:

Matthew Seex, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Steer, Ofsted Inspector

Pete Hines OBE, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

214

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

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)

6.07%

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

0.93%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.08%

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	80%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	90%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	91%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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)	91%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	91%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	94%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	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	86%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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	100%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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	86%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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	100%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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	86%	68%	18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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	100%	80%	20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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	86%	78%	8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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	100%	80%	20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	19.6%	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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