

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Address: Croxley View, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 6BW

Unique reference number (URN): 117495

Inspection report: 20 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 

Attendance at the school is higher than the national average. This is as a result of leaders' relentless pursuit of their ambitious attendance goals. They promote the importance of regular attendance widely, from the moment children start in the Nursery Year. Leaders analyse attendance information meticulously, so they can spot any patterns and address any concerns swiftly. Their positive relationships with parents and carers enable them to tackle any concerns about pupils' attendance effectively. In some cases, leaders take a bespoke approach to improving attendance or punctuality, such as providing more flexible arrangements at the start of the school day.

Calm, caring and sensible conduct comes naturally to pupils. Their behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is impeccable. This is a result of leaders' and staff's high expectations and their consistent, yet gentle, reinforcement of the school's ethos and values. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to a caring community. This leads them to look out for each other. Discriminatory and unkind behaviour is not tolerated. Leaders seek to understand the triggers for rare instances of poor behaviour. Staff adjust their approach if needed and support all pupils to meet their high expectations.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are assessed precisely, accurately and at the earliest opportunity. This enables leaders to set up individualised provision for pupils who need extra help to succeed. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities use practical resources and receive additional support from skilled staff, so that they can access the curriculum. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. This ensures that, if specialist input and advice is needed, it is provided.

Leaders maintain rigorous oversight of the school's provision for pupils with additional needs. They ensure that staff are suitably trained to reduce or remove any barriers to learning pupils face. Leaders monitor the impact of the support pupils receive meticulously, on a case-by-case basis. They make adjustments swiftly and effectively if they notice something is not working well.

Additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils, is spent wisely on strategies that will help pupils achieve well. Again, leaders check carefully that these are implemented effectively. They use information on pupils' academic outcomes, as well as their participation in the school's wider offer, to assure themselves that pupils are consistently benefiting highly from this funding.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school has strengthened its programme for personal development significantly since the last inspection. The curriculum for personal, social and health education and for relationships and sex education and health education meet statutory requirements. They are coherently planned and well taught, so that pupils develop deep and secure knowledge. For

example, pupils speak knowledgeably, often at a mature level, about issues such as the risks associated with mobile phone use, mental wellbeing, peer pressure and consent.

In the early years, the youngest children learn how to socialise successfully. They take turns, share toys and play collaboratively. Visitors, such as the police and the NSPCC, teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. A programme of assemblies, themed weeks and workshops covers important topics such as democracy, racism, and disability awareness. Pupils demonstrate strong recall of their learning from these events.

Pupils are confident, resilient and independent. They take responsibility for their own learning. On residential trips or in outdoor learning sessions, pupils learn to take risks and push themselves beyond their comfort zones. In a highly diverse school community, pupils are proud to be different. They celebrate each other's national identities and learn from their differences. This includes developing a secure understanding of belief systems other than the school's own religious character.

Leaders ensure that the personal development programme is equally accessible to all pupils. If disadvantage, special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other barriers, prevent pupils from participating, leaders take swift action. For example, leaders track pupils' attendance at extra-curricular clubs. If they notice that certain pupils or groups of pupils are not well represented, leaders make adjustments. They use pupils' views to inform the changes they make. As a result, pupils feel heard and all benefit fully from the school's carefully tailored offer.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Overall, pupils achieve well. In national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' achievements are consistently close to or above national averages in reading and writing. Many pupils achieve at a higher level. Disadvantaged pupils achieve better outcomes than disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics, fewer pupils achieve the levels they are expected to reach by the end of Year 6. However, leaders have acted decisively to address this by improving the mathematics curriculum.

In younger year groups, pupils also achieve well overall. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' achievement is above the national average. Most pupils can read and write confidently and fluently by the end of Year 2.

Across the curriculum, pupils recall what they have learned well. They apply this prior knowledge to new learning and progress steadily through the curriculum. Many pupils, with lower starting points in English language, progress rapidly and move successfully through the curriculum.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils build their learning securely. It is broad and balanced, covering the essential learning in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as a wide range of other subjects. Leaders have deliberately chosen to prioritise vocabulary and language learning in the curriculum, to meet the needs of the many pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Staff are appropriately skilled to teach the range of subjects, thanks to the ongoing training and support that leaders provide. Reading and writing are taught particularly effectively. In mathematics, leaders have strengthened the curriculum in response to weaker outcomes in recent years. This improved curriculum is at an early stage of development, and needs more time to embed.

Typically, staff use a range of teaching strategies well, such as recapping previous learning, clear explanations of new concepts and careful questioning to check pupils' understanding. Overall, staff make suitable adaptations to their teaching or to the tasks pupils carry out, to meet the full range of pupils' needs. Occasionally, staff do not make the most of opportunities to deal with pupils' errors or misconceptions. This means some pupils do not progress as well as they might.

Early years

Expected standard 

In the early years, a carefully planned curriculum supports children's learning well. A high proportion of children join the Nursery class with little or no English language skills. Consequently, there is a sharp focus on vocabulary and language development. Early reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised, again with an emphasis on communication and language. This ensures children develop the knowledge and skills they need for later learning.

Throughout the early years, songs, rhymes and stories develop children's language and introduce them to the joys of reading. In Nursery, the youngest children learn to identify letters and sounds. In the Reception Year, daily phonics lessons move children on to read and write words and simple sentences.

Staff engage effectively with parents and carers, often before children join the school, to establish relationships with children and their families. This helps children to settle quickly into school life. Staff promptly identify any additional needs children have. They put support in place to ensure children do not experience barriers to learning.

During independent, play-based learning, staff interact positively with children to move their learning on. For example, staff model the use of new vocabulary and provide opportunities for children to practise. Occasionally, these interactions are not as effective as they could be at addressing gaps in children's knowledge.

Leaders know their school well. They have effective systems for quality assurance of all areas of the school's work and are consequently clear-sighted about its strengths and areas for development. Following their quality assurance work, leaders make astute decisions to support improvement, always with pupils' best interests at heart. For example, leaders have recently strengthened the curriculum in several areas, in order to drive up standards of attainment, particularly in mathematics and the early years.

Governors bring a range of expertise and experience to their role. They fulfil their statutory duties, including providing effective oversight of the school's safeguarding systems. Governors are involved in setting the school's strategic priorities. They ask leaders challenging questions on matters such as pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement, while also providing ongoing support. Governors share leaders' ambitious vision to give every pupil the best start in life.

The school's caring ethos and values are visible in the way leaders, including governors, support staff. Leaders prioritise staff welfare, and take their workload into account when introducing changes. Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need to be able to carry out their roles as well as possible. As a result, staff are suitably skilled and highly committed to pupils' success.

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

Pupils love learning at St Anthony's. They appreciate the way their teachers make lessons enjoyable and value the friendly, caring atmosphere at the school. Pupils feel safe here. As a result, they come to school happily each day. Attendance is high.

Staff know pupils extremely well. This means pupils receive individualised attention if they have additional needs. Consequently, pupils achieve very well overall, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils who are disadvantaged or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support to help them overcome any barriers to learning. The school community is richly diverse, with a range of different languages and cultures represented. Many pupils arrive at the school with low levels of spoken English. They receive the language support they need to settle quickly and learn well. Everyone is welcome and included.

The school is very calm. Pupils behave extremely well because they are committed to the school's core values and caring ethos. Older pupils, such as the Year 6 house captains and vice captains, are excellent role models to younger pupils. Pupils value the systems that support them to meet staff's high expectations for behaviour. These include clear routines that start in the early years, the school's code of conduct, and rewards, such as certificates and house points. Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of respect and beautiful manners. Instances of unkind behaviour, bullying or any form of discriminatory behaviour are exceedingly rare.

A wide range of activities and experiences enhance pupils' learning and extends their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, pupils visit the seaside, many for the first time, on a residential trip in Year 6. Workshops and visits from external speakers promote pupils' understanding of issues such as racism, social responsibility and online safety. Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently use assessment effectively to move pupils' learning on, particularly to address any errors or misconceptions.
 - Leaders should continue to embed the new mathematics curriculum, leading to improved achievements in mathematics, including for pupils who are disadvantaged.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sunjalee Fernando.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and two assistant headteachers, one of whom is also the inclusion coordinator, and other senior and middle leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair, and the school's effectiveness adviser. She spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Westminster on the telephone.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Christian (Catholic) religious character. The last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in November 2023.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Elaine Harrold

Lead inspector:

Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ania Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector

Catherine Assink, Ofsted Inspector

Joe Creswick, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

455

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

450

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)

11.43%

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

0.88%

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

16.04%

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

Well 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	64%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	85%	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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	80%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	33%	47%	Below
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	82%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	78%	63%	Above
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	76%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	78%	59%	Above
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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	44%	61%	Below
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	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	33%	69%	-36 pp
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	82%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (revised)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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	76%	78%	-1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	78%	78%	0 pp
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	65%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	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)	11.1%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	15.8%	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.

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



