

St Bede's Catholic College

Address: Long Cross, Lawrence Weston, Bristol, BS11 0SU

Unique reference number (URN): 137627

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 ●

Leaders have put in place a range of successful strategies to improve attendance. This includes effective partnership with parents and carers in supporting their child to attend regularly. The attendance of pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other disadvantaged pupils, is above that of national averages, and continues to improve. Additionally, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has significantly reduced.

Leaders have created a culture that breeds positive, respectful behaviour at the school. Pupils continuously choose to do the right thing, and this is contagious. Bullying is never tolerated, and pupils are confident to report any concerns to a member of staff. The school is an inclusive and tolerant community. Any use of derogatory language is quickly challenged, often by the pupils themselves, and is rarely repeated. Pupils enjoy disruption free learning in lessons. Staff appreciate a level of flexibility within the school's behaviour policy. This allows them to treat pupils as individuals, and consider any adaptations needed for pupils with SEND, if any reminders about expectations are required. At social times, pupils self-regulate and engage in positive activities with their peers.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils in the main school, and students in the sixth form, are extremely well prepared for life outside of school. They are resilient and independent. Through the wider curriculum, pupils learn to respect others' values, understand right and wrong and engage thoughtfully with ethical issues. Leaders ensure that they are sensitive to the school's religious context while ensuring pupils receive the education that they need to make informed decisions. Pupils are knowledgeable about fundamental British values, while embracing being part of a rich and diverse community. Pupils are confident to manage potential risks online, or within the communities in which they live.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive and exciting programme of enrichment. Leaders make reasonable adjustments so that all pupils can participate in this broad range of opportunities. For example, they organised an in-school demonstration of equipment and how to put up a tent to reassure pupils with little or no camping experience that they could participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's award. There has been a notable increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils participating in extra-curricular activities. This develops their resilience, confidence and independence.

The school provides an effective careers programme. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn about their options for education. For example, pupils attend an annual careers fair, Year 11 pupils participate in mock interviews led by local employers and Year 10 pupils take part in work experience. They find out about different pathways because the school invites in a range of providers to provide pupils with information, for example, about apprenticeships. This means that pupils are successful at moving on to appropriate future destinations.

Leaders ensure that pastoral support is effective. Therefore, pupils who need additional help receive personalised guidance and feedback.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

At the end of key stage 4, pupils achieve consistently well across the curriculum, as shown in external outcomes. They are very well prepared for their next stages, with many choosing to go on to study at the school's sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from other disadvantaged groups, also gain above average outcomes. Students at the end of key stage 5 have achieved less well, but recent published outcomes demonstrate that this is improving.

Although pupils achieve well in national examinations, at times, the work that some pupils produce in lessons is not of a consistently high quality. Some staff do not always uphold the highest expectations in the work that they accept from pupils, in terms of presentation and content. Therefore, some pupils do not produce the best work that they are capable of. This means that their overall achievement is not as strong as it could be.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered what pupils will learn across different subjects and phases. The content is ordered logically so most pupils build their knowledge and skills successfully over time. Since the previous inspection, the key stage 3 mathematics curriculum has been strengthened. This has supported pupils' progress in this subject.

Leaders ensure that staff are subject experts. They have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Leaders provide training in areas that need further development, such as how to check pupils' understanding and use this to inform pupils' future learning. However, less effective practice in this area of teaching persists. Where this is the case, some pupils have gaps in their learning, which are not always addressed. At times, this leads to pupils not achieving as highly as they could in the work that they produce.

Teachers know their pupils and any additional needs or barriers to learning they may have. Generally, they adapt their teaching appropriately to support these pupils well. The school has prioritised support for pupils who have not yet secured strong foundations in reading. They receive effective in class support for their learning, as well as any interventions they need outside of the classroom to secure their understanding.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have responded quickly to a significant increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They identify any new or changing

needs swiftly and put appropriate support in place. Leaders regularly review the effectiveness of this and make changes as required. Staff benefit from training on how to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND in the classroom. Typically, staff implement this well, so pupils are successful in their learning.

The school has positive relationships with families, professionals and external agencies, for example with the Virtual School. This collaborative work supports pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders, including governors, carefully monitor the use of pupil premium funding. They identify barriers that these pupils may face and take steps to remove or reduce these. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well compared to other disadvantaged pupils nationally. The school has identified that staff would benefit from further guidance on supporting these pupils effectively in the classroom. This work is in the earlier stages of development.

The school use alternative provision for a small number of pupils. Leaders ensure that settings are safe and that they provide an appropriate curriculum related to the needs of individual pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school well. They have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors understand and meet their statutory duties. They have high expectations of school leaders and hold them to account. However, they also act as advocates for the school and provide support to the headteacher and wider leadership team.

Leaders take decisions that are in the best interests of pupils. They recognise that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other disadvantaged or vulnerable pupils may need a slightly different approach to enable them to be successful. They keep these pupils at the front of their mind when making significant decisions about school improvement.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to an evidence informed professional learning programme. This is focused on identified areas for school improvement within classroom practice. However, leaders do not review the impact of this closely enough to ensure that highly effective teaching is sustained across all areas of the school.

Early career teachers are well supported. They speak highly of their experience of working at the school. Leaders take positive action to reduce staff workload. They ensure that staff feel valued and that their wellbeing is prioritised. Staff appreciate this and enjoy working at the school. Many staff have worked at the school for a long time.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The sixth form has grown significantly since the previous inspection. It has been through a period of change, with leaders identifying that improvements were needed to improve students' outcomes. They have taken action quickly and decisively. For example, subject teaching time has increased, and tutors now take on more responsibility for tracking the academic progress of their tutees. Students follow appropriate study programmes that meet

the needs and interests of their cohort. Staff know students well and generally provide effective support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the most recent published outcomes show that students now achieve close to the national average.

Students in the sixth form benefit from an extensive programme that supports their personal development. They have many opportunities to broaden their talents and interests. For example, in knitting, public speaking and volunteer work. They participate in an enrichment week, which allows them to work with employers on an enterprise focus. Students receive high-quality careers information, education, advice and guidance to successfully move on to the next stage of education. For example, 90% of students chose to move on to university and were successful in securing their place. They are well prepared for adulthood in modern Britain.

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

The school is a diverse and welcoming community. Pupils thrive here. They are happy and attend regularly. Students in the sixth form, who join from other secondary schools, are warmly welcomed into life at St Bede's. Pupils enjoy positive, mutually respectful relationships with their peers and staff. Bullying is not tolerated in this school. Pupils show respect and demonstrate the school values of 'work hard, be kind, and do the right thing'. They feel safe and are confident to talk to staff about any worries they have.

Pupils embrace opportunities to improve school life, for example, through their work to be an ecologically friendly school. Many pupils participate in the school's wider enrichment offer. This includes learning to play an instrument, representing the school at a sport, or rehearsing for school shows, such as the upcoming 'Sound of Music'. Pupils are proud to participate in the school's annual cultural week. This event helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain as they learn different languages and try foods from other cultures.

The school is rightly proud of the consistently high national outcomes that pupils achieve at key stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing also achieve well. Achievement at key stage 5 is improving and was in line with the national average last year. Pupils enjoy learning and are highly motivated to be successful in their studies. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages in education, employment or training. However, at times, the teaching that pupils and students in the sixth form receive across the curriculum varies in quality. Consequently, some pupils' work does not always meet the high standards expected by leaders.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the quality of provision at post 16, so that the improvements in academic outcomes are embedded over time.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently check pupils' understanding well, so that highly effective teaching is embedded across subjects and year groups.

- Leaders should more closely review the impact of the school's professional development programme, so that strategies to support teaching and learning are embedded in practice.
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About this inspection

This school is part of a single academy trust, St Bede's Catholic College, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Elisa Vigna.

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 held discussions with the principal, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the Director of Schools and Colleges at the Diocese, and the chair and vice chair of the trust board. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 took place in November 2021.

The school makes use of 8 alternative provisions, including 3 that are unregistered.

Principal: Mr Robert King

Lead inspector:

Kelly Olive, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew Shanks, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Collins, Ofsted Inspector

Mike Foley, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Parsons, 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

1,315

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,208

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.81%

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: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.98%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.75%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	65.4%	45.2%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	61.1%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	57.0	45.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	55.6	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	57.8	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.38	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.57	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	40.0%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	26.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.5%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	39.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	39.9	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	47.7	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.55	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.13	-0.57	Above

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	40.0%	52.8%	-12.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	26.3%	53.1%	-26.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	37.5%	52.4%	-14.9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	39.2	50.3	-11.1
2023/24 (final)	39.9	50.0	-10.1
2022/23 (final)	47.7	50.3	-2.6

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.55	0.16	-0.71
2022/23 (final)	-0.13	0.17	-0.29

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	96%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	99%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.72	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.32	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.16	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

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)	5.9%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	9.0%	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)	14.8%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	19.9%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	17.2%	26.5%	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.

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.

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