

St John's Catholic Primary School, Camborne

Address: Trevu Road, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7AE

Unique reference number (URN): 140763

Inspection report: 10 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well across the school. Their achievement is reflected in key stage 2 national test results, where attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at expected and higher standards is above the national average. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, progress well from their starting points. They secure the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils generally build their knowledge well across the wider curriculum subjects. They make links and recall prior learning with ease. For example, in history, Year 4 pupils can explain the process of mummification when discussing the Ancient Egyptians. Older pupils apply their knowledge of different geographical regions confidently. They use subject-specific vocabulary, like 'pharmaceuticals' or 'petroleum' accurately, to help them understand imports and exports.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is a focus for the school. Leaders take a tenacious approach to understanding the causes of absence and removing barriers to pupils attending well. Leaders act quickly when pupils' attendance falls below their high expectations. Leaders build effective relationships with families and actively look for solutions, offering help and support if required. Through the school's extensive pastoral work, persistent absence rates have fallen and attendance is now improving.

Staff set high expectations, which pupils consistently meet. Pupils know and follow the school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Consequently, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. At breaktimes, pupils have access to a vast array of equipment and thoroughly enjoy engaging in purposeful, active play. They are polite and show respect towards staff and each other. Across the school, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere. The school provides effective welfare and pastoral support, guided by the school's values. Bullying is not tolerated. If it happens, pupils know staff will deal with it quickly. This helps pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved the curriculum since the previous inspection. They have identified the knowledge and vocabulary for each subject and ensure that pupils learn these in a logical order. School and trust leaders recognise the strengths and priorities of the curriculum and teaching. They regularly check on the quality of teaching and make decisions in the best interests of pupils.

Staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge and present new learning clearly. They ensure pupils build their understanding over time. For example, pupils in Year 6 draw on their knowledge of multiplication facts to solve more challenging problems involving fractions and percentages. Staff check pupils' understanding through assessment and tasks, such as

‘fluent in 5’, designed to help pupils remember and practise what they have previously learned.

For any pupils who struggle, staff use a range of techniques to adapt learning activities carefully. They provide strategies such as visual prompts, additional resources and careful reshaping of tasks that support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well. Most pupils develop the foundational knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. If pupils have gaps in these areas, they receive support to catch up. At times, teaching does not address handwriting errors. Some errors persist and this hinders the quality of some pupil’s work.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff know pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their individual needs. Staff identify pupils’ barriers to learning accurately. Where needed, leaders collaborate with external specialists, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need. Staff make adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND thrive. For example, they break learning into small stages for pupils who require this approach. Leaders ensure pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers.

The school uses its additional funding effectively. It ensures that disadvantaged pupils are fully included in the many opportunities provided to enhance learning. Leaders use a clear and consistent cycle to review and assess the provision and its impact, ensuring that pupils’ needs are effectively met. Some pupils receive an appropriate and highly personalised curriculum in the ‘Rainbow Room’. This supports them socially and emotionally. It also helps pupils to develop independence skills they need to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Trust and school leaders form a supportive partnership. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic in fulfilling their duties. Leaders understand the school’s strengths and identify the actions needed for improvement. They make strategic and well-informed decisions in the best interests of pupils. Prioritising attendance and high expectations for pupils’ achievement further strengthens their work.

An inclusive and calm environment exists across the school. Generally, leaders and staff provide a high-quality education that has a positive impact on most pupils, both socially and academically. They tailor the curriculum and support to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The trust supports school leaders effectively, checking closely on all aspects of the school’s work. Leaders know there is more to do to ensure the provision in the early years is as effective as the rest of the school.

Leaders ensure staff get the support and training they need to deliver the curriculum well. For example, staff benefit from relevant training and coaching to develop their skills and subject knowledge. Leaders have created a positive, open culture, where everyone feels welcome and supported. Staff feel proud to work at the school. They value the focus school leaders have placed on their wellbeing and workload. Parents and carers are positive about

the care and education that their children receive. Many praise the dedicated staff team and the school's nurturing approach.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders promote the personal development of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, well. Pupils develop their knowledge of relevant issues, such as peer pressure and the difference between harmful drugs and helpful medicines. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and health education. They learn about changes to their bodies during puberty and the importance of consent and personal space. They understand the effect of physical exercise on their bodies and learn how to look after their mental health.

Leaders weave the fundamental British values, such as democracy, throughout the curriculum. They contribute to all aspects of day-to-day school life, building character and enabling pupils to be active citizens. For example, pupils proudly take on roles, including play leaders, librarians and 'mini teaching assistants'. This provides them with a keen sense of responsibility.

Pupils demonstrate a secure sense of equality, equity and respect for difference, including for those with different religions or beliefs, such as Islam or Judaism. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know they can report any concerns to an adult or via one of the school's 'worry boxes'. The curriculum is carefully enriched by a wide range of trips. For example, pupils visit a zoo to strengthen their knowledge of science. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, engage in extra-curricular clubs and experiences, such as rugby, netball or football.

Pupils in the 'Gift Team' and the school council look for ways to improve the school and local community. They take part in activities, such as litter picking and donating to the food bank, to support others. Year 6 pupils also work with visitors, like the 'mini police', on projects to tackle anti-social behaviour and graffiti. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention 

Some aspects of the early years provision are not as effective as in the rest of the school. Learning activities do not consistently engage children or enable them to develop and deepen their understanding of the intended curriculum. For example, sometimes staff do not model or correct children's writing effectively, such as children's pencil grip or letter formation. This means that when children finish their time in the Reception Year, they are not as well prepared for key stage 1 as they should be. Leaders are aware of these areas and are in the process of implementing improvements.

In the early years, children are well cared for. They benefit from warm relationships with staff and a safe, happy environment. The indoor and outdoor provision is thoughtfully organised to support children's vocabulary development. Early reading is prioritised. Children learn the

sounds and letters that they need to read. They read books that closely match their stage of reading and receive timely support if they fall behind. Parents and carers are positive about the care their children receive.

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

St John's is a highly inclusive school, where pupils belong and thrive. The school values the multicultural nature of its community and extends a warm welcome to all its families. Leaders recognise that pupils learn best when they feel happy, safe and secure. Pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy learning. This makes the school a calm and purposeful environment.

Leaders have high ambitions for all. Pupils enjoy their learning and make steady progress through the curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, get the support they need to overcome any barriers. By the time they leave the school, published outcomes from key stage 2 national tests show that pupils achieve above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed to ensure that children in the early years are as well prepared as possible for the next stage of their education.

Warm relationships exist between adults and pupils. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils know trusted adults will resolve the situation swiftly. Across the school, pupils behave well. Learning is rarely interrupted, and playtimes are enjoyable. The school provides high-quality pastoral support to pupils and their families. Pupils who might find the start of the day more difficult receive appropriate support. 'Nutmeg', the school dog, greets other pupils as they arrive. This contributes to the harmonious atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils learn what it means to live in modern Britain, including understanding different cultures, healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Clubs such as netball, football and 'chill club' help to nurture pupils' talents and interests. Pupils thoroughly enjoy trips and visits and talk enthusiastically about how these complement their learning.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years engage children in high-quality activities that develop and extend their knowledge and skills.
- Leaders should ensure that the approach to teaching handwriting is implemented consistently well so that pupils' writing fluency and the quality of their work improve.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief

executive officer, Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth O'Donovan.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, the deputy headteacher, the director of education from the trust, a trustee, the chair of the local CAST board and other members of this body, along with a wide range of staff, pupils and parents during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Plymouth. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection is due this academic year.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nicola Armstrong

Lead inspector:

Gavin Summerfield, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Jane Tustain, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Burgess, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

156

Below 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)

25.00%

Close to 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

1.92%

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

26.28%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	85%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	77%	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	88%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	96%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	86%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	61%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	63%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	40%	44%	Close to average

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	83%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	70%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	74%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	40%	59%	Below

‘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	61%	68%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	69%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 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	83%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	60%	78%	-18 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	70%	78%	-8 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 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	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	40%	79%	-39 pp

‘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)	7.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	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)	23.3%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	33.3%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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