

St Patrick's Catholic College, A Voluntary Catholic Academy

Address: Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, Teesside, TS17 9DE

Unique reference number (URN): 142281

Inspection report: 13 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 is a high priority at St Patrick's. Leaders have embedded robust systems that support them to track pupils' attendance closely and often. Leaders are tenacious in their work to ensure that they understand the barriers that some pupils face to attending school. Leaders put in place a range of carefully tailored strategies to support pupils and families, drawing on the support of other professionals in a timely way when it is needed. As a result, leaders have improved pupils' attendance and reduced persistent absence rapidly. The school has sustained high rates of attendance that are above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have ensured that there are consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Leaders provide staff with effective support and training that enables them to apply the behaviour policy appropriately. There is a deeply respectful culture in school where pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They work industriously in lessons and are committed to achieving well. Older pupils are supportive role models. For example, they take on the role of buddies to support younger pupils when they start school. Pupils are proud of the fact that everyone is welcome and equal at their school. Prejudice of any sort, including bullying, is not tolerated. Leaders act quickly on the rare occasion that there are issues. Rates of suspensions have been significantly higher than national averages over time. There has been a demonstrable reduction in the number of suspensions in recent times.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved pupils' achievement in recent years. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. They generally develop secure knowledge and skills over time. This results in pupils producing work that is usually of a high quality. Despite a dip in attainment in public examinations in 2025, pupils typically make secure progress through the curriculum, relative to their starting points. The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school achieve close to the national average for similar pupils. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding consistently across all areas of the curriculum to further increase pupils' rates of attainment. Currently, as a result of their achievement and the support that they receive, pupils typically secure appropriately ambitious next steps in further education or training by the time they leave the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum that is typically well designed so that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. The curriculum supports pupils to prepare well for their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders have

identified the very few areas of the curriculum that need further refinement. They have taken appropriate steps to make improvements to these aspects of curriculum design.

The majority of teachers are subject specialists who use their expertise effectively. For the very few teachers who are not subject specialists, the school provides appropriate support, resources and training. Teachers typically provide pupils with clear explanations, ask probing questions and check pupils' understanding effectively. Teachers generally design activities well to help pupils secure their understanding. They ensure that appropriate support or adjustments are in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In most cases, teaching is adapted skilfully when pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their learning.

Leaders ensure that suitably trained staff provide timely, targeted support for pupils who have gaps in their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge. This supports these pupils to catch up quickly and access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

St Patrick's is an inclusive school where there are high expectations for all pupils. With support from the trust, leaders have developed systems to ensure that, typically, pupils' needs are accurately identified, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils known to social care. Leaders draw on a range of professionals and services to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. They provide pupils with a range of carefully tailored interventions that support them to overcome the barriers that they may face in their learning or wellbeing. Well trained staff employ a range of purposeful strategies to help pupils overcome their individual difficulties. These approaches are reviewed by leaders on a regular basis to ensure that pupils receive the most appropriate support. The vast majority of parents of pupils with SEND feel well supported and communicated with regarding the provision that their children receive.

Leaders' effective pupil premium strategy accurately identifies the barriers that pupils who are disadvantaged face. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from the school's inclusive offer of extra-curricular opportunities. Leaders monitor the impact of additional funding appropriately. For example, there is a comprehensive programme of support for pupils who need additional help with their reading. Pupils catch up quickly. Alternative provision is used appropriately and in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have a deep understanding of the community the school serves and the barriers that many of its pupils face. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and a clear focus on priorities that serve to benefit pupils. Leaders have improved the school since the previous inspection. This is reflected notably in pupils' behaviour, attendance and the improved rates of progress that pupils make relative to their starting points.

There is an inclusive culture at the school. A comprehensive and research-informed programme for staff training and development supports staff to have a secure understanding

of pupils' needs and the strategies to use to support them well. As a result, pupils who face additional barriers are supported and have their needs met effectively.

Staff are very proud to work at the school. Morale is high. Leaders have fostered a supportive culture. Staff appreciate leaders' visible presence around school and their readiness to listen and support when it is needed. They value the clear and consistent systems that leaders have established, particularly to support behaviour management. Staff are supported well to manage their workload, and leaders prioritise their wellbeing.

Those responsible for governance are skilled and knowledgeable. They are committed to the school's vision and have a clear understanding of their statutory duties, which they fulfil well. They challenge and support leaders appropriately.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has a comprehensive programme for personal development that supports pupils well. There is a carefully planned curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) that includes teaching pupils relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) in an age-appropriate way. Through this, pupils learn about a range of appropriate topics, such as online safety, consent and managing finances. While pupils' knowledge of PSHE and RSHE is generally secure, leaders recognise the need to deepen pupils' understanding consistently across these curriculums.

Pupils' personal development is carefully embedded throughout the school's work. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on different beliefs, values and issues. They are supported well to engage in a range of topics for debate. They are taught about equalities in PSHE and explore this further throughout the curriculum, for example when they learn in English about issues relating to gender in *Romeo and Juliet* and role models in women's sport in physical education. Pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy when they take part in a ballot to vote for pupil leaders. Pupils also take part in a range of trips, for example to a synagogue and nearby museums.

Leaders ensure that pupils are offered a thorough careers programme. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, learn about a variety of training pathways and engage with a range of employers. Staff support students well so that by the end of key stage 4, they secure places in further education or training. Leaders recognise pupils' personal and academic achievements regularly, for example through the weekly 'Praise Fest'. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer and make good use of them and the wider opportunities to support the community. These help to build pupils' confidence and resilience successfully. Pupils' social skills are highly developed.

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

St Patrick's school motto, 'faith, family, future', is at the heart of this school and lived out every day. Pupils feel a deep sense of belonging there. The school is a close community where pupils feel safe. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and value the high-quality care and support that they receive. A high proportion of pupils face a range of barriers to

their learning and wellbeing. Staff use their secure knowledge of pupils' needs to support them well. Effective teaching is typical. As a result, pupils' attendance is high. Pupils typically make secure progress through the curriculum and achieve well.

The school is very calm and orderly. Leaders have embedded high expectations for behaviour and conduct. Pupils rise to these expectations consistently. They demonstrate excellent manners. For example, pupils hold doors open for adults and greet them respectfully when they walk past them. In lessons, pupils are deeply committed to their learning, work extremely hard and follow instructions closely. At social times, they mix well. Bullying is rare, and, if it does occur, adults deal with it swiftly.

Pupils play an active part in the school community. For example, they take responsibility to lead on areas such as sport, social media and communication. Through these roles, pupils develop their confidence, teamwork and public speaking skills well. The school provides pupils with a wide range of carefully chosen opportunities to support their personal development. This includes a range of clubs such as darts, choir, debate, Bible study and sport. A range of trips, including visiting places of worship, museums and local employers, enhances pupils' understanding of diversity within and beyond modern Britain effectively. Pupils engage positively with the wider community by participating in charity and parish events such as coffee mornings and a recent 'Reindeer Run'.

Next steps

- Leaders should work with staff to ensure that teaching is adapted consistently well to support pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding so that they are supported to achieve all that they can.
 - Leaders should further develop the impact of both the teaching and assessment of personal, social and health education to ensure that pupils develop a consistently deep understanding of this curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Karen Siedle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Dias.

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 executive headteacher, headteacher, leaders from the school and from the trust, members of teaching and non-teaching staff and several groups of pupils during the inspection. An inspector spoke with the chair of the board of directors and others

responsible for governance. An extensive number of lessons was visited across all subjects. Pupils' classwork was also considered.

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 Catholic religious character. The last Section 48 inspection took place in March 2022.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, one registered and 2 unregistered.

Headteacher: Deborah Law

Lead inspector:

Dan McKeating, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paul Bell, Ofsted Inspector

Jayne Gaunt, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Lane, Ofsted Inspector

Geoffrey Lumsdon, 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 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

550

Well 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: 1,067

School capacity

556

Well 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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

41.64%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

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

2.18%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.36%

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)	30.7%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.8%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	40.2	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	44.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.3	46.3	Below

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)	-0.18	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.39	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' 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)	18.9%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	19.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	19.0%	25.2%	Close to average

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)	33.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.2	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.61	-0.57	Close to average

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)	18.9%	52.8%	-33.9 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	19.0%	53.1%	-34.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	19.0%	52.4%	-33.4 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)	33.4	50.3	-16.9
2023/24 (final)	36.0	50.0	-14.0
2022/23 (final)	33.2	50.3	-17.1

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)	-0.75	0.16	-0.91
2022/23 (final)	-0.61	0.17	-0.78

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)	77%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	87%	94%	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)	7.7%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.9%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.1%	9.0%	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)	24.7%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	31.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	38.4%	26.5%	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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