

St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School

Address: Loyalty Road, Hartlepool, TS25 5BA

Unique reference number (URN): 144902

Inspection report: 16 June 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 prioritised at St Aidan's. Leaders are relentless in their drive to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Rigorous tracking and effective partnerships with parents and carers allow leaders to identify any barriers to pupils' attendance quickly. Leaders often go to great lengths to support pupils and their families, to ensure pupils attend. Rates of attendance have remained above the national average over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is significantly below the national average.

Warm, positive relationships underpin the school's behaviour policy that staff apply consistently. Pupils are regularly encouraged, rewarded and affirmed. Pupils are motivated by this and want to do well. In lessons, they work diligently and cooperatively. They share ideas and contribute to lessons with enthusiasm. Around school, pupils follow the rules and well-embedded routines. While pupils enjoy firm friendships and socialise well, they are taught how to resolve any disputes independently and are confident to do so. Any rare incidents of bullying or unkindness are resolved quickly. Staff are well trained and skilled at supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. For example, talk and play-based therapies, small group interventions and 'soft starts' to the day help to ensure that pupils' needs are well met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well at St Aidan's. In national tests, pupils' results are typically in line with the national average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make clear progress from their starting points. Effective targeted support means that pupils who have gaps in their foundational knowledge, such as in reading, writing and mathematics, catch up quickly.

In lessons, pupils generally demonstrate secure knowledge. They recall aspects of the curriculum they have been taught before, including in the wider curriculum. Pupils apply their foundational knowledge with increasing success. For instance, pupils use their skills in mathematics in regular problem solving and reasoning activities. Pupils' handwriting is increasingly consistent, although there remains some variation in the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing across the curriculum.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum. It is clearly sequenced to allow pupils to develop their knowledge and skills over time. Recent developments to the curriculum,

including a new phonics programme and some subjects in the wider curriculum, need embedding. Leaders recognise the need to further increase the expertise of subject leaders, so that they lead, shape and monitor the quality of teaching and learning consistently.

Leaders prioritise the foundations for learning. For example, pupils read daily. Leaders' recent work to develop the quality and accuracy of pupils' handwriting is increasingly evident in pupils' work. Pupils are supported to secure the basics in mathematics before regularly applying their knowledge in problem-solving activities. Appropriate, targeted support is put in place for those pupils who need help to catch up with their peers.

Typically, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain concepts clearly. Adopted retrieval strategies used at the start of lessons help pupils to successfully remember more of the curriculum over time. There is some variation in the quality of the checks that teachers make to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and how this information is used to make timely adaptations, where needed, to secure some pupils' understanding.

Pupils who face barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are generally supported well. For example, careful deployment of teaching assistants and additional resources, typically help pupils to access the curriculum securely.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a flying start to their education in the early years at St Aidan's. Staff know the children and their families well. Children learn and understand expectations and routines from Nursery onwards. They behave well. Children across the provision sustain their engagement as they learn, play and cooperate with others. Staff ensure children are cared for and become increasingly independent.

Staff identify gaps and barriers to learning quickly. To address these gaps, they place a sharp focus on developing children's foundational skills including in letter formation, pencil grip, spelling and phonics. Staff make suitable adaptations to support children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, strategic seating arrangements and adapted resources mean that children get the help they need to make clear progress.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that identifies the knowledge that children will learn across the provision. It is typically taught well. Staff maximise opportunities to support and extend children's language. They model ambitious vocabulary and encourage turn-taking and extended talk, for example, about numbers, shape and patterns. Adults' interactions with children are typically high-quality.

By the end of Reception, children typically develop the knowledge and skills they need and are ready for their next stage of learning. They experience a positive and supportive transition into Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise inclusion at St Aidan's. The high proportion of pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing are well supported. Additional leadership support provided by

the trust has accelerated further developments in this aspect of the school's work. Clear systems, regular checks on learning and effective partnerships with parents, carers and a range of professionals allow the needs of individual pupils to be identified quickly. As a result, pupils get the right support, at the right time. While leaders monitor pupils' progress and the impact of the support they put in place, they recognise the need to increase the level of rigour in this aspect of work.

Appropriate training that is focused on understanding pupils' needs is increasing staff expertise. Staff typically use a range of effective strategies to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, additional resources, adjustments to the curriculum and careful deployment of teaching assistants support pupils to make clear progress.

Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, strategically. For example, funding has been used to ensure that staff are trained and skilled at delivering a range of talk and play-based therapies. These support the language and communication development, as well as the social and emotional needs, of disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. Additional academic support, including for reading, helps pupils who have gaps in their learning to catch up.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a positive ethos, underpinned by the school's Christian values, that instils in pupils a sense of belonging. They ensure that the school is a nurturing, aspirational and supportive place for pupils to learn, play and develop. Leaders' high expectations and tenacity ensure that pupils behave and attend very well. They take appropriate action to address areas for development. For example, with support from the trust, they have made rapid improvements to the systems and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders make sensible strategic decisions that pupils benefit from. For example, the recent restructuring of the leadership team has increased the capacity to improve the curriculum and teaching. Leaders identify priorities accurately, including the need to develop subject leadership further so that it is consistently effective.

Governors and trustees fulfil their duties effectively. For example, they provide leaders with appropriate support and challenge. They are conscientious about their safeguarding responsibilities and seek regular, objective assurances of the school's safeguarding culture.

Staff are positive about working at the school. They value the ways that leaders prioritise their workload and wellbeing. For example, they appreciate the opportunities to work collaboratively, including across the trust and the protected time to fulfil wider responsibilities. Staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of professional learning that is increasing their expertise.

Leaders work effectively with parents and carers. They often go to great lengths to support them to help ensure that pupils are safe and that they attend regularly. The vast majority of parents who responded to an inspection survey were full of praise for the school and the high-quality pastoral care, support and education their children receive.

Leaders have adopted an appropriate personal, social and health education curriculum. Alongside this, pupils follow a comprehensive curriculum for relationships and health education. Through these, pupils learn about consent and healthy relationships. They have a secure knowledge of online safety. For example, pupils know the age restrictions for popular online applications and why these are important. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. For example, they know what constitutes a balanced diet and what impact an unhealthy diet has on physical health.

The school prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Visits to different places of worship, such as to a mosque and cathedral, support pupils' understanding of different faiths. Pupils generally understand British values, such as democracy and individual liberty. They embrace difference at St Aidan's. Pupils are proud of the fact that everyone is treated equally. Leaders choose the stories that pupils read carefully to ensure that they reflect social, religious and cultural diversity.

Staff offer pupils a broad range of clubs that supports pupils' wider development. For example, knitting, dancing and boxing develop pupils' social skills, communication and physical development. Pupils develop their independence through residential visits in key stage 2. Curriculum visits such as to the beach, castles and a power station, enrich pupils' understanding of the curriculum.

Pupils play an active role in the school and local community, for example as 'buddies', school councillors and when leading assemblies. Pupils regularly visit residents at a local care home. These opportunities support pupils to develop their confidence, leadership skills and sense of citizenship. They recognise the wider benefits of volunteering.

Leaders place a firm emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. 'Worry boxes' and play-based strategies provide alternative ways for pupils to express themselves and share concerns. When necessary, leaders implement tailored strategies that support pupils' mental health and wellbeing effectively and they work closely with other external professionals to support pupils.

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

Positive relationships are at the heart of school life at St Aidan's. Staff work tenaciously to build effective partnerships with parents and carers. They often go 'above and beyond' to provide support for families, so that pupils are kept safe, attend regularly and are well known. Parents value the high-quality pastoral care that the school provides. It helps to create a distinct sense of community where staff support pupils to achieve the school's vision to 'grow together with love.' Pupils trust the staff and have confidence that they will respond quickly to any concerns raised. Bullying is rare. Pupils enjoy the friendships they make.

The school rules, 'be ready, respectful and safe', are securely understood by pupils. In lessons, pupils work hard. Around school they demonstrate excellent manners and welcome

visitors warmly. Pupils across all key stages play and work together cooperatively, including in the early years. The school's core value of 'togetherness' is reflected in the way pupils feel a deep sense of belonging at St Aidan's. One pupil captured the view of many others when they told inspectors: 'I feel like I fit in here.'

Pupils follow a broad curriculum that leaders continue to develop. Teaching is generally effective. Pupils are supported to remember what they have learnt over time and they typically achieve well in national tests. A high proportion of pupils face additional barriers to learning and/or their wellbeing. These pupils are supported to learn effectively alongside their peers. They make secure progress and are well cared for.

Opportunities to be school councillors, 'buddies' and lunchtime monitors provide pupils with ways to play an active part in school life and develop wider skills such as teamwork, communication and a sense of responsibility. Residential visits develop pupils' independence. Trips to different places of worship enrich pupils' understanding of world faiths, helping to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed recent changes to the curriculum and ensure that pupils benefit from consistent, high-quality, adaptive teaching.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen the expertise of subject leaders so they can embed recent changes, sustain improvements and lead further development of the curriculum effectively.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Rickeard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Taylor.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also spoke with the CEO and other trust leaders including the chair of the board of trustees. They spoke with the chair of the local academy council and a representative from the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2023.

Headteacher: Gillian Hood

Lead inspector:

Dan McKeating, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Angela Vear, Ofsted Inspector

Jenny Marsden, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

385

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

389

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)

52.06%

Well 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: 26.3%

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

0.26%

Well 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

18.18%

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	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	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	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	76%	75%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	66%	74%	Below
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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	89%	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	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	52%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	46%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	44%	Above

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	69%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	76%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

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	68%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	69%	58%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	58%	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	82%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	59%	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 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	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	52%	69%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	46%	67%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	66%	-8 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	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	81%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	80%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	78%	-3 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	68%	78%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	78%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	78%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	77%	-19 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	82%	80%	2 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	81%	79%	1 pp
2022/23 (final)	88%	79%	8 pp

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 (3 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	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 (3 term)	8.4%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.1%	16.2%	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.

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