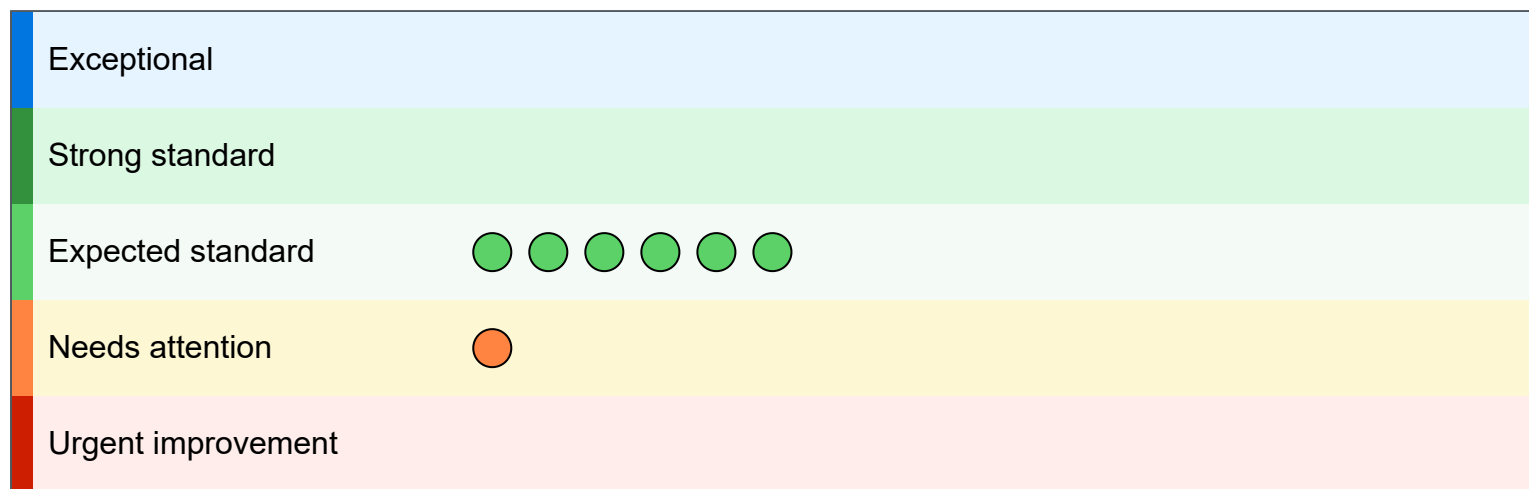


St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School

Address: Cowpen Lane, Billingham, TS23 1LJ

Unique reference number (URN): 142734

Inspection report: 8 January 2026



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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' regular attendance. Staff work with families to address barriers to attendance and communicate expectations clearly. There is a clear and well-thought-out approach for tracking and analysing attendance. Leaders use this information to tackle trends or patterns in absence rates and to identify how best to support pupils. As a result, recent attendance figures show improvement, including reductions in persistent absence for key groups, indicating a positive impact on pupils' overall attendance rates.

Behaviour across the school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils understand the school's expectations and respond positively to the school rules. Leaders have revised the school's approach to behaviour and trained staff in de-escalation strategies and emotional coaching. This has reduced behaviour incidents and improved pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated in school and that staff will act if they raise a concern. Some pupils still need ongoing support to manage their behaviour. Staff are increasingly effective at meeting these pupils' needs.

In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They take pride in their work. The culture of praise and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils motivates pupils to do well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad curriculum that reflects the school's context and pupils' needs. They understand the quality of teaching across the school and have rightly prioritised helping pupils develop the essential reading, writing and mathematics skills they need to succeed. Teaching typically reflects leaders' intentions so pupils engage with learning and build knowledge over time.

Leaders and staff know that many pupils have gaps in their essential mathematical knowledge. Leaders recognise this limits pupils' progress at times. They have rightly redesigned the curriculum to ensure pupils build their knowledge in small, well-ordered steps. A recent change in teaching now means that revisiting prior learning and highly effective modelling of thinking are seen in lessons. The whole-school focus on extra mathematics practice throughout the day helps pupils succeed in lessons.

Teaching of essential early reading skills helps most pupils learn to read quickly and fluently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive extra, personalised phonics teaching so they are well prepared for key stage 2.

Staff make regular checks on pupils' learning and are astutely aware of any gaps that need addressing. They correct pupils' misconceptions quickly. For example, if a pupil struggles to complete a task, they receive same-day support to help them. Staff know pupils' needs well. In lessons, the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those known with other vulnerabilities receive timely and effective support to help them to learn the curriculum effectively.

Early years

Expected standard 

The school has high expectations for all children. The curriculum is well planned and builds knowledge steadily from Nursery to Reception Year and into Year 1. Children benefit from a caring and well-organised environment. Recent investment to improve the learning environment is having a positive impact on children's participation and levels of concentration in their learning.

Leaders understand the key priorities for children as they join the early years. They quickly find out what children know and can do. This helps them provide targeted support quickly, especially to develop children's communication and language skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. Staff know the barriers some children face and respond appropriately. Familiar routines help children focus and engage well with learning. For example, in daily phonics lessons children remember letter sounds and keenly apply their knowledge so far to blend sounds to read words.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is well considered. Children learn to take turns and share. The school rules are introduced effectively. Children quickly begin to understand why these are important. As a result, children develop positive social skills and are well prepared for Year 1.

Most interactions between staff and children are of high quality, with a focus on language development, the introduction of new vocabulary and building understanding. However, at times, the quality of interactions is variable because adults do not always use questioning or explanations with sufficient precision. As a result, opportunities to deepen children's understanding and extend their learning are not consistently maximised throughout the day.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture where pupils' needs are identified early and accurately. Staff know pupils well and understand the barriers that some pupils face. Leaders use what pupils know, can do and where they may need more help, along with professional advice, to plan support. They make adaptations and reasonable adjustments that help pupils to access learning and feel included. This happens in a timely manner, so pupils receive the support they need as quickly as possible.

The need for a careful, step-by-step approach to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well understood and established. Staff receive training to support pupils effectively. Leaders' work is well guided by the trust, local network and wider national expertise. The school has a well-established system to review pupils' needs, progress and the impact of the support they receive. This includes the voice of the pupils, parents and carers. This helps parents to feel included in the support given to their child. Parents are highly appreciative of this approach.

Leaders' approach to spending extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is linked clearly to pupils' needs and shows positive impact, particularly in supporting pupils' wellbeing and progress. Disadvantaged pupils attain well, and they are increasingly well prepared for their

next stage of learning. Leaders work closely with parents and external professionals, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils' needs and aspirations are central to decision-making.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The newly formed leadership team demonstrates a well-considered approach and shared vision for the leadership of the school. Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and the most important areas for development. Appropriate priorities have been identified and timely action has been taken to address these. In recent years, leaders' work, particularly in relation to inclusion, behaviour, attendance and securing essential knowledge in learning early on, has started to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Those responsible for governance are aware of and meet their statutory responsibilities. Financial and staffing resources are allocated appropriately to sustain and secure improvements in the school. Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement and recognise the progress and development the school has made.

Staff benefit from a well-curated professional development programme, with training aligned to the introduction of policy and process changes. The trust provides leaders with relevant professional development effectively. Staff report feeling well equipped to support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders support staff effectively in relation to their wellbeing and workload. As a result, staff report high levels of morale. They feel valued by leaders and the trust.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

There is a clear and consistent focus on developing pupils' spiritual and moral understanding across the school. Promoting positive mental health is a significant strength of the school's work. Pupils demonstrate maturity and confidence when discussing mental health. They thrive on opportunities to raise awareness both in school and the wider community. This supports pupils well in managing transitions, including moving to secondary school and coping with other changes in their lives.

The personal development programme reflects leaders' secure understanding of pupils' needs. Pupils are given meaningful opportunities to contribute to school life and share their views, for example by suggesting ideas for lunchtime clubs. A range of activities, including themed curriculum days, pupil parliament, creative and sporting opportunities, broaden pupils' experiences. In addition, the school develops relationships with local businesses to establish career and aspirational events, as well as funding to allow all pupils to access theatre visits or other educational trips. Pupils speak positively about these opportunities that broaden their horizons.

Pupils recall learning from personal, social and health education lessons, particularly in relation to bullying and staying safe online and outside of school. They have an age-appropriate understanding of what healthy relationships should be like. Pupils can describe the positive characteristics that should form the basis of any good friendship. However, their understanding of some areas, such as equality and cultural diversity, is less secure.

Pastoral support is offered to pupils in a timely and meaningful way. Leaders and staff work closely with families. Pupils facing disadvantage receive practical support that helps to reduce barriers to their wellbeing and engagement in school life.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils have gaps in their essential knowledge, especially in mathematics, which limits their achievement in more complex tasks. While leaders have accurately identified these issues and have taken swift and effective action to address them, the impact on pupils' achievement is not yet consistently realised or where leaders want it to be. For many pupils, this gap in their knowledge hinders their achievement and their ability to access age-related tasks successfully.

Pupils' attainment in national tests shows an improving picture over time. In recent years, this has increased year on year. Disadvantaged pupils now achieve particularly well in comparison to their counterparts nationally. The gap between them and their non-disadvantaged peers is also beginning to close. Pupils generally progress appropriately from their starting points, and most are prepared for their next stage of learning. Pupils' work shows growing understanding across subjects, and many pupils can apply what they know across the curriculum.

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

Pupils at St John the Evangelist feel safe and listened to. Relationships between staff and pupils are nurturing and respectful. Pupils value being with their friends and describe school as a place where they can enjoy activities together.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand the school's rules and routines, which help learning and social times to run smoothly. Pupils report that any unkindness is addressed and that staff intervene effectively if needed. Leaders' work to strengthen behaviour systems and improve staff approaches has reduced incidents over time. Pupils say behaviour is better than it was previously.

Pupils enjoy learning and work hard in lessons. They appreciate the support they receive from teachers, particularly when learning is difficult. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other barriers to their learning receive targeted help. This helps them to take part in school life and learn well alongside their peers.

Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of essential aspects of mathematics and lack confidence in the subject. This limits how well they can access more complex learning and how well prepared they are for their next steps in learning. Leaders have started to address this issue, such as through more frequent practice and a sharper focus on core number skills, but this work is still developing.

Leaders involve pupils in decisions about school life to motivate and enrich their learning, for example about lunchtime clubs and wider opportunities across school. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know that adults will listen and act if they are worried. Staff respond quickly when concerns arise.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop and strengthen pupils' core foundational knowledge in mathematics, ensuring that learning builds progressively and securely over time.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently maximise interactions with children in the early years to deepen their learning and readiness for key stage 1.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Bishop Hogarth 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 (CEO), Stuart McGhee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

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.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body and the chair of directors. They also spoke with the CEO and a representative of the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, the school has appointed several new members of staff, including members of the senior leadership team.

Headteacher: Mrs Linzi Nelson

Lead inspector:

Georgina Chinaka, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

Janet Madden, 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 8 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

146

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

195

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)

28.13%

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

4.79%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

25.34%

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

Above average

What does this mean?

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

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	33%	60%	Below

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	69%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	71%	Below

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	59%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	73%	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 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	38%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	31%	44%	Below

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	58%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	50%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	63%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	46%	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	38%	68%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	31%	66%	-36 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	58%	80%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	54%	78%	-24 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	50%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	46%	77%	-31 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	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	46%	79%	-33 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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	13.4%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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