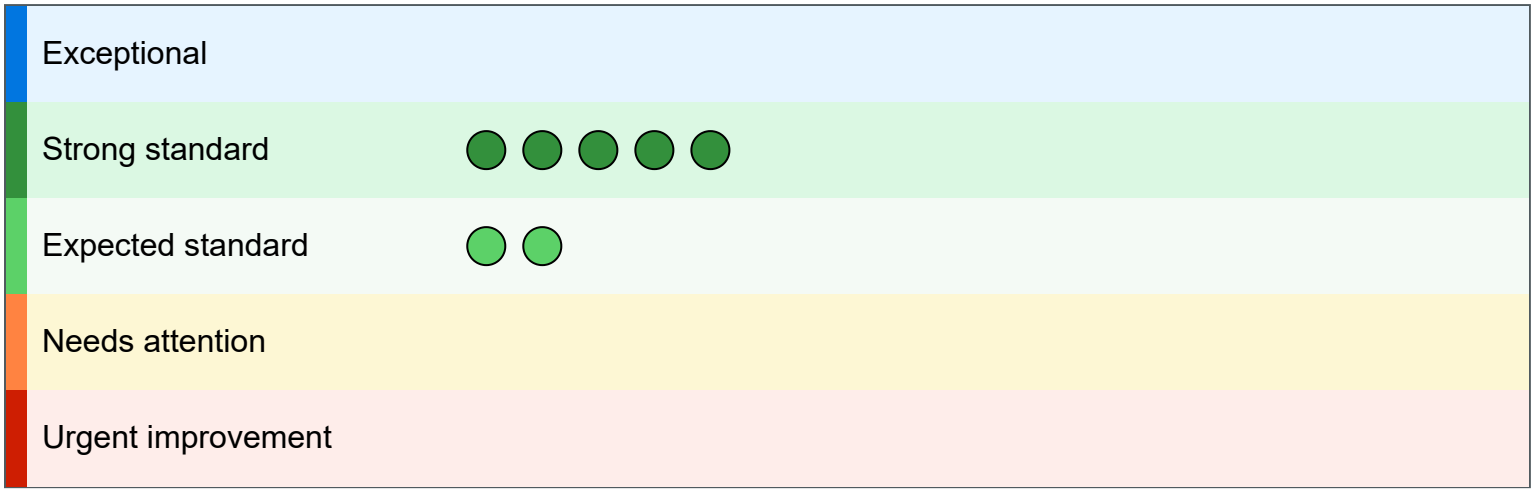
St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

Address: Becket Close, Birchanger Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 5BN

Unique reference number (URN): 138612

Inspection report: 9 September 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.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. They produce high-quality work across the curriculum. Published outcomes reflect this strength. In mathematics, some vulnerable pupils have not achieved as well as their peers. Leaders identified this issue and have taken effective action to address it, which is currently not reflected in published outcomes.

Children make excellent progress from their starting points in the early years. Staff develop the knowledge, language and communication skills that children need for future success. Staff prioritise phonics and deliver it effectively. Outcomes exceed national averages. Leaders implement a systematic approach to early reading. As a result, pupils become fluent and confident readers.

Pupils develop secure writing skills. They write with impressive stamina and accuracy. They improve their spelling, punctuation and handwriting over time. In foundation subjects, pupils recall prior learning and apply it successfully to new concepts. They develop the skills and understanding they need for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Attendance is prioritised. Leaders understand attendance patterns and trends in detail. They monitor attendance rigorously and identify concerns quickly. They work closely with families to understand and address barriers to regular attendance. Leaders use highly tailored interventions effectively and secure significant improvements for individual pupils as a result.

Attendance, safeguarding, inclusion and pastoral systems are closely aligned across the school. Leaders use this joined-up approach to meticulously identify needs and barriers across these areas and provide swift, targeted support. They maintain a relentless focus on pupils who are persistently absent. As a result, pupils attend regularly and benefit fully from their education.

Leaders establish high expectations for behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations and have excellent behaviour. Staff build these expectations through warm, respectful relationships. As a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, show high levels of self-discipline and treat others with respect. Pupils understand the school's rules and expectations. Bullying is rare. Leaders respond swiftly and proportionately to any incidents, whether online or offline.

Leaders implement inclusive behaviour systems. They make appropriate adjustments while maintaining high expectations. Staff use self-regulation strategies effectively to help pupils recognise their emotions. Leaders use suspension sparingly. This helps pupils sustain positive behaviour and remain engaged in learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

The school provides an ambitious curriculum. The school structures and sequences it to build learning carefully over time. Leaders accurately evaluate the strengths and areas for development and take effective action to improve the education for pupils. The school places a high emphasis on developing language, reading, writing and mathematics skills. Staff teach phonics systematically and with fidelity. They use assessment strategies effectively for any pupils who fall behind and provide timely support to enable them to catch up.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They explain and model new learning clearly. Teachers use highly effective questioning and routinely check what pupils understand. This ensures that pupils are not left behind when learning new concepts. In mathematics, teachers use practical resources and visual representations purposefully. Leaders strengthen teachers' expertise through specialist teaching and high-quality professional development.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum and teaching meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers know disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They provide targeted support to secure participation and deepen understanding. They adapt this support as needed. These approaches help pupils build knowledge securely and prepare well for future learning. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Published outcomes reflect the strength of the curriculum and teaching. Leaders' continued improvements help more pupils succeed and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders drive improvement through a clear and highly ambitious vision for the school. They focus relentlessly on raising pupils' achievement and engagement. They understand the school's priorities and know the community, and they use this knowledge to shape their work and improve standards for all pupils. Leaders model professionalism and integrity. They prioritise vulnerable pupils. Decisions are made that systematically reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing and improve outcomes.

All staff benefit from high-quality professional development at all stages of their careers. They value the training and development available to them. Leaders expertly align training with the school's priorities. As a result, staff strengthen their practice and continuously improve the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Leaders also work closely with colleagues across the trust to share expertise, raise standards and achieve meaningful continuous improvement.

Staff feel valued and supported. They are proud to work at the school. Leaders promote staff wellbeing through a supportive, open culture. They review workload regularly and take action when needed. Leaders also build strong links with the local community. Parents and carers value the school's frequent, transparent communication.

Governors and trustees have a thorough understanding of the school's priorities and context. With this level of understanding, a rigorous and clear succession plan was in place,

which aided in a smooth transition to a new headteacher. They provide support and challenge through regular visits. Governors and trustees value the excellent partnership between leaders and the community. They fulfil their statutory duties and ensure clear accountability across the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing are a strength of the school. Leaders have a clear and aspirational vision for the personal growth of pupils. They know pupils and their community well and use this knowledge to shape this part of the provision. They are ambitious for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, and actively remove barriers to participation. Leaders have developed recognised expertise in nurture and share this expertise across the trust.

Pupils experience an effective personal development programme. They learn about citizenship and enjoy the enrichment and opportunities for reflection to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils respect others, contribute positively to their community and value diversity. They celebrate differences and show tolerance towards different viewpoints. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of democracy and other fundamental British values, for example, the election of Head Boy and Head Girl. Pupils value the leadership opportunities, including roles such as school council and 'play leader'. Through these, they develop their sense of citizenship and confidence.

Leaders provide a carefully structured personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education curriculum. Staff adapt learning at every opportunity to ensure all pupils can access this valued curriculum. Pupils develop a mature understanding of respectful relationships, consent, equality and protected characteristics. They can speak with confidence about how to stay safe online and offline and know how to seek support from trusted adults.

Leaders identify pupils who need additional support for their wellbeing and provide targeted nurture support and counselling. This work further strengthens pupils' resilience, confidence and engagement. Pupils say that they feel safe and well supported to manage their emotions.

Pupils greatly benefit from a wide range of clubs, visits, careers activities, citizenship opportunities and community projects. These experiences broaden their horizons and help them become more independent and well prepared for the next stage of education and life beyond school.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard

Children settle quickly and engage positively in school life. Staff establish warm, caring relationships, and children feel safe and valued. They prioritise children’s wellbeing and support them in regulating their emotions and growing compassion from the outset. Staff

identify potential barriers quickly and adapt transition arrangements to meet individual needs. Initiatives such as the 'teddy bear picnic' help children become familiar with the setting before they start school.

Leaders have designed a clear, sequenced curriculum that builds knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. They prioritise phonics, fine motor development and early mathematics. Staff encourage children to ask questions and learn in a variety of ways, including through books and songs such as ‘Five Currant Buns’. Routines support independence. Children manage their belongings, follow daily expectations and develop positive habits.

They use purposeful interactions to support communication and language development. These approaches are not consistently embedded across the provision at present. At times, staff miss opportunities to extend children’s vocabulary, language and thinking. However, on the whole, pupils develop the language and communication skills they need in readiness for Year 1.

Pupils enjoy the outdoor learning area. Staff use this area to promote collaboration, turn-taking and positive relationships as children play and learn together. Leaders recognise the need to further strengthen the outdoor area.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have created an inclusive culture at the school. They identify any barriers to learning and wellbeing that pupils face early. They provide the help that pupils need to remove these barriers quickly. This includes securing specialist support, such as speech and language therapy for pupils who need it.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. They use visual resources, adapted materials and targeted adult support at the right time for the right pupils. These approaches help pupils access their learning alongside their peers. Leaders work closely with parents, carers and professionals. Together, they ensure pupils generally receive the support they need. Leaders' work on inclusion would benefit from more rigorous monitoring to ensure adaptations closely match pupils' emerging needs over time.

Leaders identify the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. They use additional funding well, for example, for additional academic and pastoral support. Some pupils access a wellbeing room and receive support from trained staff. Staff use self-regulation strategies to support pupils to manage their emotional needs when in class. Leaders train all staff in inclusive practice.

Staff in the 'Fireflies' bespoke provision create a nurturing environment. Leaders focus on successful reintegration into mainstream classes. They ensure that pupils take full part in school life. Typically, pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

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

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this welcoming and inclusive school. It is a calm, orderly and supportive environment. Pupils attend regularly and engage well in lessons. Children in the early years develop independence quickly and flourish in the provision. Pupils across the school achieve well from their different starting points. For example, pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. They are ready for their next steps and well prepared for life beyond the school gates.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They follow positive habits for behaviour in lessons and around the school. The rules are clear, and pupils enjoy the rewards on offer for good behaviour. Bullying is rare. Pupils show respect for others and work cooperatively. They develop valuable communication and wellbeing skills. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to for help. They feel a keen sense of belonging.

Pupils value the positive relationships they build with staff and each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those needing additional pastoral care benefit from support that is carefully matched to their needs. All pupils enjoy the range of clubs and trips. Pupil leadership roles give them opportunities to contribute to the community. These experiences broaden their horizons and enrich their learning experience.

Next steps

- Leaders should further embed the curriculum in the early years and outdoor area to enrich learning, strengthen children's language development and communication skills and ensure that all children achieve well from their individual starting points.
- Leaders should ensure that adaptations are monitored and receive the same level of rigour, implementation and evaluation as the rest of the curriculum so that pupils overcome barriers to learning.

About this inspection

This school is part of St Benedict Catholic 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 (CEO), Jonathan Ronan, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Noel Campbell.

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 headteacher, senior school leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair,

the CEO, directors, and a member of the diocese.

This inspection took place on 9 and 10 September 2026.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Southwark. Its last section 48 inspection was in April 2025.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection, including senior leadership and staffing. The current headteacher took up their post in September 2026.

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Adam Windley.

Headteacher : Louise Chabvuka

Lead inspector:
Sam Carnegie, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Miz Mann, Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Dando, Ofsted Inspector
Russell Bennett, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 9 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

409
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: 268

School capacity

420
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)

12.71%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

2.44%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.05%
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	75%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	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	59%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	33%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	82%	46%	Above
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	66%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	44%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	82%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	72%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	91%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	58%	Above

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	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	82%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	58%	59%	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 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	59%	68%	-8 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	69%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	67%	14 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	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	80%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	78%	-12 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	72%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	78%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	91%	78%	13 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	75%	77%	-2 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	59%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	79%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	79%	-21 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)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.0%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.4%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.5%	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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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