

St Anthony's Voluntary Catholic Academy

Address: Dane Park Road, Hull, HU6 9AA

Unique reference number (URN): 144102

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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have improved attendance following a period of decline. The school now has a clear approach that helps staff act early on concerns. The school removes barriers through targeted actions, such as the 'walking bus', breakfast club and active parental engagement. These strategies have moved whole-school attendance close to national figures, and leaders have reduced persistent absence for pupils who need the most support. Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continues to improve, reflecting the impact of these positive strategies.

The school maintains calm, orderly and respectful behaviour across classrooms and social times. Pupils follow well-established routines and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak confidently about the school's 'Sparkle' ethos and behaviour expectations. Leaders ensure staff apply the behaviour policy with consistency. This is supported by training that helps staff understand pupils' needs and supports them to resolve issues and move forward, for example, through reset-and-reflect. The school does not tolerate bullying and pupils are confident that staff would deal effectively with any such incidents. Staff provide effective pastoral support, for example, through coaching and mentoring pupils with SEND and those that display more complex behaviours. Pupils respond well to the positive culture at the school and feel that staff know and care for them.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear view of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They make informed decisions to improve both. The school's ambitious and broad curriculum is continually refined so that pupils gain the knowledge they need for their next steps. Pupils now benefit from a curriculum that is well designed and sequenced across all year groups. For example, leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme to strengthen pupils' reading and writing skills. The school prioritises early reading. Pupils read books that closely match their phonics knowledge. However, there are inconsistencies in pupils' handwriting, spelling and letter formation. This is because, in some cases, misconceptions are not always addressed and corrected in a timely manner. As a result, some pupils do not develop fluent, accurate writing and this can make it harder for them to express their ideas clearly.

Leaders make sure teachers have secure subject knowledge through training by experts. Teachers use techniques such as modelling and questioning to explain new ideas well. Pupils are encouraged to use new vocabulary and explain their thinking. Leaders strengthen pupils' mathematical fluency, for example, through daily mathematics practise and 'Fluency Fridays'. Leaders and staff know pupils' needs well and adapt teaching for disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care. As a result, pupils engage positively in learning and achieve well from their starting points.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children generally benefit from warm, purposeful interactions with staff. Leaders design a well-sequenced curriculum that supports progress across all early years areas. They use a range of approaches, such as fine motor tasks and small-group teaching. These approaches enable children to practise and secure new learning.

The school creates a language-rich environment, where staff focus on communication and vocabulary. Staff model new words with 2- and 3-year-olds in activities that describe dinosaurs and parts of the human body. They also help children explain simple ideas, including mathematical problems. On a small number of occasions, staff do not extend the language of individual children who would benefit from it. This means that some children do not always develop as rich a vocabulary as they could.

The school prioritises reading. Children in Reception take part in daily phonics sessions. Recent changes to the phonics programme are beginning to improve early reading skills. Many children now apply sounds with growing independence. Leaders establish clear routines and, in the main, behaviour is settled and calm. Staff know children's needs well and adapt provision effectively. These adaptations support disadvantaged children, those with SEND and those known to social care.

The school builds positive partnerships with parents through online updates, daily conversations and home-learning support. Children make secure progress and are increasingly well prepared for transition to Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school creates an inclusive culture, where staff identify pupils' needs early and respond with precision. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care receive timely, well-matched support. The school reduces barriers to learning, for instance, through visual timetables and structured routines. Pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) benefit from targeted strategies. Support is tailored to individual needs. For example, some pupils benefit from communication resources and strategies that promote emotional wellbeing.

Leaders use a range of effective approaches to check pupils' progress and wellbeing. As a result, attendance and early years outcomes are improving for key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils. The school works closely with families and external agencies. This includes educational psychologists, the Virtual School and other specialists. Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support pupils who may need extra help with learning, attendance or social and emotional development. They also review alternative provision and part-time timetables to ensure decisions remain in pupils' best interests.

Pupils learn alongside their peers, and staff use specialist training and strategies to meet diverse needs. Leaders build positive relationships so pupils feel known, supported and able to thrive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need sustained improvement. For example, leaders have set out a coherent strategy to strengthen pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. The strategy also focuses on support for vulnerable pupils and clarity around common teaching expectations. Leaders use well-developed checks on the quality of education. This includes drawing on staff voice, coaching, external reviews and peer evaluation to identify strengths and development needs. Staff benefit from a professional learning programme that is high quality, evidence-informed and sustained. This is delivered through coaching and leadership pathways. These help to build expertise for teachers and support staff. Leaders act on workload concerns, and staff report a collaborative and supportive culture.

Governors and trustees meet statutory duties and hold leaders to account effectively, particularly in relation to disadvantaged pupils, special educational needs and/or disabilities and children known to social care. They scrutinise information closely and provide balanced challenge and support. The trust offers strategic direction, setting clear expectations for curriculum precision and reading, writing and mathematical skills. The trust recognises that some improvements are still embedding. Leaders make decisions that place the needs of the most vulnerable at the centre, including close work with the Virtual School, early identification of need and partnership with external agencies. Leaders ensure they maintain positive relationships with parents and carers. Overall, leadership is driving meaningful improvement, even though some recent actions are too new to show their full impact.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a clear and well-structured personal development programme that helps pupils build confidence and gives them a strong sense of belonging. The school adapts its programme to local needs through assemblies, theme days and targeted interventions that reinforce key messages. The school gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their beliefs, learn about different religions, consider right and wrong and discuss ethical issues in age-appropriate ways. Pupils enjoy learning about these aspects of personal development. They are proud of the 'Sparkle' certificates they achieve to recognise their positive actions, character traits and progress.

Leaders widen pupils' understanding of the world through carefully chosen cultural experiences, including visits to cities, museums and activity centres. This helps them appreciate heritage, diversity and the importance of teamwork. The school strengthens pupils' confidence and social skills through leadership roles, such as the school leadership team and librarians. These roles teach pupils about cooperation, democracy and responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to support the local community. They do this by organising donations of clothes and food for charities.

Pupils develop moral awareness and emotional literacy through structured lessons on relationships, puberty, consent and anti-bullying. Pupils articulate this knowledge well and demonstrate a clear moral compass, when presented with challenging dilemmas and scenarios. Leaders ensure disadvantaged pupils and those with additional vulnerabilities receive tailored pastoral support from trusted adults, who help them manage their emotions and resolve conflict. Pupils talk confidently about respect, kindness and solidarity, drawing

on fundamental British values and the school's ethos. Leaders also make sure pupils learn about online and offline risks in a way that is clear, practical and rooted in real-life examples.

Leaders provide a wide range of clubs, enrichment events and creative opportunities that help pupils discover interests and develop talents. The school prepares pupils well for future learning and participation in society.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils' achievement is variable. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and Year 4 multiplication tables check have been below the national average. In addition, pupils who start from a higher point of prior attainment do not always reach the standards they are capable of by the end of key stage 2. This has affected how well some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are prepared for the next stage of their education.

In response, leaders have made changes to the curriculum so that pupils build secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are now making better progress through the curriculum. At the end of key stage 2, outcomes are now broadly similar to the national average. Nevertheless, these improvements are recent, and it is too soon to see their full impact in pupils' work and in published outcomes.

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

This is a school with a warm, calm and supportive ethos. Pupils feel safe, included and known as individuals. In the words of one pupil, representing the views of many, 'Everybody is treated the same at this school, we all have a say. Teachers listen to us.'

Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times because expectations are clear and staff model respect. Pupils say that staff help them and act quickly, when concerns arise. Bullying is rare, and if it does happen, pupils trust staff to deal with it effectively. Pupils attend more regularly than in recent years because leaders remove barriers and keep in close contact with families.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They talk with pride about the books they read, the mathematics they practise and the wider experiences that bring learning to life. Children in the early years settle quickly because staff build positive relationships and create spaces that help them communicate, play and explore. Pupils who face extra challenges, including disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care, give them support so they can take part in lessons and make progress.

Pupils develop confidence through leadership roles. For example, pupil librarians support younger children with reading. Pupils enjoy clubs, such as indoor board games, football and drama club. They love being part of musical theatre productions and enthusiastically sing

rousing songs in the hall. They talk fondly about trips and visits they have made to various cities.

Improvements to teaching and the curriculum mean that pupils are building knowledge more securely than they have done in the past. Nevertheless, as these improvements are recent, some gaps remain in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics knowledge. Over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they should, including in national tests.

Pupils know staff want the best for them. They leave the school increasingly ready for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed recent curriculum improvements to ensure pupils gain the knowledge and skills needed to access more complex learning and to improve published outcomes over time.
 - Leaders should ensure that expectations for handwriting, spelling and letter formation are applied consistently across subjects so that pupils develop accurate and fluent writing.
 - Leaders should ensure that high-quality interactions are applied consistently in the early years so that children develop their vocabulary and make progress from their starting points.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St. Cuthbert's Roman 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), Rachel McEvoy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Laws.

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 CEO, trustees and governors, the head of school, senior leaders and staff during the inspection.

Inspectors visited various lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also spoke with pupils about other aspects of the school, including behaviour and opportunities for personal development.

Inspectors evaluated responses from Ofsted's parent survey. They spoke with various parents to gather their views about the school.

Information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in 2022.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The school also, under the same registration, runs provision for 2-year-olds.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection and now provides a nursery for 2-year-olds.

Head of School: Mrs. Jessica Storch

Lead inspector:

Chris Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kyrstie Stubbs, Ofsted Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, His Majesty's 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

229

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

210

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

48.34%

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

3.06%

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

11.35%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs 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	46%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	26%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

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	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	69%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	87%	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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	61%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	44%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	25%	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	54%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	47%	62%	Below
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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	58%	Below

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	46%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	69%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	59%	Below

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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	44%	69%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	67%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	25%	66%	-41 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	54%	80%	-26 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	80%	-33 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	56%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	69%	78%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	78%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	77%	-40 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	46%	80%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	69%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	79%	-53 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	38%	79%	-42 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 (2 term)	5.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	14.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.3%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

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

Expected standard

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

Needs attention ●

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

Urgent improvement ●

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

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