

St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School, Pateley Bridge

Address: King Street, Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 5LE

Unique reference number (URN): 121549

Inspection report: 22 September 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

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

There is a comprehensive personal development and wellbeing programme at St Cuthbert's. Leaders meet statutory duties such as the teaching of relationships and sex education. They adapt the curriculum to individual needs. They provide extra support or discuss key facts before a lesson. The Christian ethos of the school forms part of its successful approach to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Teachers use the words of the school's motto, 'believe, achieve, inspire' as themes in class and during assemblies.

As a result of leaders' thorough approaches, pupils learn to be eloquent, confident and resilient. They discuss diversity, misogyny, homophobia and racism. They learn empathy for others and tolerance for difference. For example, they learn about the experiences of the 'Windrush' generation. They learn in-depth online safety skills including how to protect themselves from online and offline strangers and disinformation. Older pupils act as 'peer leaders' for younger pupils. They develop a thorough understanding of British values linking democracy to activities in their own school. These include the 'pupil parliament' and voting on their class names. Pupils say that leaders regularly listen and respond to their feedback, making the school a better place.

Leaders provide high-quality nurture to all pupils. They train staff to skilfully support a range of pupils' emotional needs. Pupils independently access the nurture support. They talk about the positive difference it makes. Staff know pupils well. They vigilantly identify pupils who may need additional support, even if they have not requested it.

There is a range of clubs, trips and visits. This includes visits to Brimham Rocks, Nell Bank and annual choir events in Harrogate. Leaders invite interesting visitors to the school, including some from a range of faiths such as Islam. These opportunities broaden pupils' understanding of other people, places and interests.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Small cohort sizes mean that published national results do not always fully represent overall pupil achievement at St Cuthbert's. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national outcomes. This includes phonics outcomes which leaders prioritise. Leaders and staff provide effective targeted ongoing support for pupils who do not pass the phonics screening check. This means that the vast majority of pupils in key stage 2 read with accuracy and fluency. Most pupils make progress across all subjects, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other barriers to their learning. Progress is seen in pupils' individual plans, in their reading and in the work they produce. Leaders train staff to check pupils' understanding before, during and after lessons. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning and support them, ensuring that additional progress is made. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders correctly prioritise attendance in their plans and their actions. The school's size and the number of pupils who enrol or leave at different times makes spotting patterns difficult. Leaders therefore focus on each individual pupil's needs. They carefully and accurately identify pupils' unique barriers to attendance. Leaders use rewards, fines, attendance contracts and family support to encourage attendance and punctuality. When more help is needed, they seek out professional advice from external organisations. If advice is not available, they resolutely continue to request help or create their own unique solutions. Attendance is improving gradually, case by case. This includes for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other barriers to learning.

Behaviour is typically good across the school, including in the early years. Leaders set clear behaviour expectations and boundaries. Staff firmly remind pupils of these when needed. Pupils say there is no bullying and know how to ask for help if they need it. Leaders track and record behaviour incidents effectively. They follow up incidents with pupil conversations, support and consequences. This includes the exceedingly rare occasions when pupils have used derogatory language. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive specialist, effective support with their behaviour when needed. Pupils' good behaviour helps them to learn. They listen to teachers intently without distraction from others.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders dynamically plan and update their curriculum from the early years upwards. The curriculum covers all subjects over a 2-year cycle. Some subjects, such as art, are taught in blocks of whole days or weeks. Leaders sequence plans and identify key vocabulary so that pupils build their knowledge over time. However, there is lack of consistency in the planning and teaching of the handwriting curriculum. This is because different examples of letter formation are used within and across classes. This sometimes slows down pupils' writing fluency.

Leaders provide teaching ideas within the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, staff plan any adaptations to support pupils with SEND quickly and effectively.

Thoughtful staffing decisions are made by leaders. They employ teachers who understand the challenges of teaching mixed-age classes. There is a consistent lesson structure so that pupils know what to expect and can concentrate on their learning. The teaching of reading and writing is consistent within the phonics scheme. Teaching across the curriculum, including mathematics, is of good quality. This is sometimes highly effective and engaging. For example, children in the early years learn about the history of their own school with great enthusiasm and interest. They develop an understanding of events which took place before they were born.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders believe that there is no ceiling to what pupils can achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with disadvantaged backgrounds.

Leaders check pupils' needs when they start school. Staff provide appropriate support. They receive training to write effective individual plans for each pupil and how to review the impact of any support given. Staff involve parents in regular planning meetings. They record appropriate adjustments and adaptations in individual pupils' workbooks and how this helps them. Examples include access to quiet spaces and individual resource boxes. As a result, all members of staff know how to give the right support, including in the early years.

Leaders fulfil their statutory duties regarding alternative provision. Leaders prioritise pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). They design bespoke processes for identifying pupils' SEMH needs, offering timely support. Leaders liaise with external agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health service. This improves pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Leaders use pupil premium funding appropriately for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Staff give effective support and these pupils make progress from their starting points. Leaders correctly identify attendance as an ongoing key priority in their pupil premium strategy. Leaders engage fully in local area inclusion partnership activities, including participating in board meetings.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately evaluate the school's strengths, making improvements where necessary. They have high expectations for all pupils. This can be seen in their aspirational personal development and wellbeing programme offer. Leaders support their staff, providing them with wellbeing days and gym facilities. Staff feel that they belong and are valued by leaders. They say that their workload is manageable and there are opportunities for good-quality training.

Leaders invite parents to attend events such as weekly celebration assemblies, planning meetings and parent workshops. The active parent-teacher association plans events such as school barbecues for pupils and families. The diocesan adviser and the school's governors regularly visit the school. They know the school and community well. The local vicar leads collective worship regularly. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, supporting and challenging leaders' strategic goals. They take firm, decisive action when this is needed. Their training is up to date and appropriate.

Leaders engage external professional help for pupils and families where necessary. This includes partners from the local authority and the health services. They seek out external support to improve their own practice, for example, when improving attendance.

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

St Cuthbert's is a small, rural school where leaders, staff and families know each other well. There is a 'family' feel to the school where pupils receive positive community support. New pupils enjoy a warm welcome, including the relatively high proportion who join the school from further afield or in the middle of a school year. Pupils know and follow the school rules. Consequently they are polite and behave well. They understand how to make positive friendships. Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is no bullying. Pupils appreciate their teachers, they enjoy their lessons and make good progress. They give examples of

how teachers help them or others to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support to participate in the life of the school. Pupils of all ages learn to be leaders within one of the school's pupil groups, such as the eco-warriors.

Pupils access a broad range of clubs relative to the small size of the school. These include sports clubs, cycling club, choir and outdoor learning activities. Pupils also attend brass tuition and careers and finance events. There are educational presentations by a range of visitors, including emergency services professionals, who teach personal safety skills. Leaders ensure that barriers to participation are removed where possible. Pupils are empowered by this to thrive and discover their wider interests and talents.

There are a range of community links that include the 'working bees' where families make minor repairs to the school such as painting fences, the parent-teacher association who run events and distribute uniforms and local shops that provide vouchers for families. In addition, 'Community Nidd' donates items such as crockpots for cooking. These opportunities encourage pupils and families to enjoy a strong sense of belonging to the school and locality.

Next steps

- Leaders should consistently promote and pursue increased attendance, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. They should ensure pupil premium funding is strategically directed toward increasing the time and training for staff to support with this.
- Leaders should ensure that all pupils develop their fluency and accuracy in handwriting by embedding a fully consistent approach to handwriting styles, teaching and resources. This should include a focus on fine motor skills for children in the early years.

About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Amanda Simmons and Marianne Tharby.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place from 22 to 23 September 2026.

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 co-chairs of the governing board, the diocesan adviser, the local authority school improvement adviser and the headteacher and senior leaders during the inspection.

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 Leeds. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2021.

The school currently makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection: the chair of the board of governors has changed.

At the time of the inspection, there were 57 pupils on roll.

The school has a small number of children who attend early years. Due to the small numbers, this provision is not reported on separately. Inspectors gathered evidence about the experiences and outcomes of these pupils, and this evidence is included in the inspection findings above.

Headteacher: Nicola Thornber

Lead inspector:

Abbey Broom, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Rowena Sykes, 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 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

58

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 268

School capacity

119

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.79%

Close to 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

8.62%

Well above 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

29.31%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	61%	S
2022/23 (final)	43%	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	64%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	74%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	72%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	73%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

‘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

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	14%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	29%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	29%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	14%	68%	-53 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	29%	80%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	71%	78%	-6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	29%	80%	-51 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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 (3 term)	8.8%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
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)	13.3%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.9%	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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