

St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Address: Lugsdale Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6DD

Unique reference number (URN): 111391

Inspection report: 27 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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils develop a deep body of knowledge and communication skills from their varied starting points across all subjects and year groups. They produce work of a high standard. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, secure the detailed knowledge and skills they need to access the next stage of their education.

In national tests, pupils achieve above national average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils are closing the gaps with their non-disadvantaged peers nationally and achieve well at St Gerard's. It is clear that leaders work to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their barriers or needs, develop strong foundational knowledge, with any gaps identified and closed quickly. Nevertheless, leaders know that pupils' achievement can improve further still in some areas, such as the Year 4 multiplication times table check. Leaders' ongoing emphasis on providing a high-quality curriculum demonstrates their effective work to strengthen all pupils' attainment in national tests.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders track pupils' attendance meticulously. Their knowledge of pupils and families allows them to provide tailored and targeted support to remove any barriers. Attendance has continued to improve over recent years. Leaders' highly effective intervention has reduced rates of persistent absence for many pupils in the school. All staff maintain a strong culture for promoting high attendance. It is notable that this work has significantly improved school attendance for some groups, including disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils behave with high levels of respect and self-discipline in and around school. They benefit from a calm and nurturing environment that leaders have thoughtfully developed. Pupils know their school vision for everyone to love, hope, dream and achieve. This helps them to feel a deep sense of belonging and behave well. Classrooms are purposeful places where pupils are focused on learning and do not disrupt others. Adults rarely need to address poor behaviour and pupils relish the rewards that they receive for making the right choices. Incentives such as the headteacher's award and the 'points shop' help pupils to regulate and celebrate in each other's successes. Although not common, leaders deal with significant behaviour incidents and bullying effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that pupils receive a high-quality and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is well designed so that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. Teaching is highly effective. Teachers' explanations are very clear. They provide precisely planned opportunities for pupils to revisit and embed their learning. Teachers' sharp focus on oracy and learning ambitious vocabulary supports pupils to become confident and articulate learners.

Reading, writing and mathematics are at the heart of the curriculum. Phonics is taught effectively by well-trained staff. Handwriting and spelling are embedded alongside phonics from key stage 1. This creates secure foundations for pupils to become successful readers and writers. Through robust review, leaders make well-informed refinements in the teaching of these subjects. For example, changes to the teaching of number fluency have been used to maximise the number of pupils who secure their times tables knowledge. Leaders regularly check for any gaps in pupils' learning and provide the appropriate support to help pupils to keep up with their peers.

Across the curriculum, pupils benefit from highly skilled teachers and support staff who expertly help them. Carefully considered adaptations to the curriculum support pupils with additional vulnerabilities such as being new to the English language or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to experience academic success.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created an inclusive culture that seeks to transform pupils' experiences and outcomes. They identify pupils' individual needs early and accurately. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the ambitious expectations leaders have and the tailored support they receive. Leaders make sure that pupils who need extra help, quickly receive it. They act swiftly to identify and remove barriers to learning or wellbeing for pupils known to children's social care and those facing additional challenges, such as those joining the school at different points in the year or who are new to the country. As a result, pupils settle well and flourish academically and socially.

Staff receive high-quality training to implement effective strategies, so that all pupils access the full curriculum and experience success. Leaders monitor the support pupils receive rigorously and ensure that the extra help has the intended impact. They work in strong partnership with families and act on advice from other professionals so that pupils feel secure, valued and play a full part in school life.

Additional funding is used successfully to support disadvantaged pupils to overcome the barriers they face. Leaders assure themselves of the impact of their work to ensure that it is making a difference for all pupils and that it is sustained over time.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and the community that they serve. They have created a culture of continual development and high aspiration that benefits every pupil. Leaders' relentless focus on removing barriers for disadvantaged pupils has a positive impact on their academic outcomes and wellbeing. Governors are well informed and have the necessary skills to ensure that decisions are consistently made in pupils' best interests. They provide rigorous challenge alongside thoughtful support to leaders, resulting in sustained improvement in aspects of the school's work. Leaders are committed to staff's professional learning. They use evidence-informed training and professional qualifications that enable staff at all levels to develop areas of expertise to drive school improvement. Teachers, including those early in their careers, receive effective ongoing support that enables them to have the knowledge, skills and passion to provide

consistently high standards of education for pupils. Leaders' commitment to investing in their staff results in pupils achieving well, including some of the most vulnerable pupils.

Staff appreciate the care shown for their wellbeing. Leaders have established a culture of teamwork and professional growth, which they role model well. Staff value collaborative work and have the opportunity to support other schools in areas such as phonics and leadership capacity. All those involved with the school share the vision and relentless approach to ensure that every child is cared for and invested in. Staff, pupils, parents and carers value this and the impact of leaders' work to promote high expectations so all pupils flourish at St Gerard's.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have carefully crafted a personal development programme that seeks to fully enrich pupils' school journey. Pupils have access to vast opportunities that broaden their horizons and fully prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop detailed understanding, including how to stay safe, such as road awareness, water safety and acting responsibly on the internet. Through relationships and sex education, pupils gain age-appropriate knowledge related to healthy relationships and consent. They know how to protect themselves from potential harm. There is a clear focus on providing pupils with strategies for managing their mental health and wellbeing. Every pupil logs their morning feelings on the class electronic mood tracker. Leaders use this data to intervene quickly. Pupils value this highly, alongside the range of pastoral support they can readily access.

Pupils are taught about differences and similarities between faiths. They talk maturely about acceptance and tolerance and value the diversity within their own school community. Projects such as fundraising help them demonstrate a sincere and genuine respect for others and the world around them. Pupils show empathy towards others and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. This starts in the early years, where children learn to share resources and resolve minor conflicts with increasing awareness of others' feelings. This helps pupils grow into thoughtful and resilient individuals.

Pupils take pride in roles, such as pupil parliament, play leaders and eco-warriors. They understand how these responsibilities contribute to the school and wider community. Pupils participate wholeheartedly in a wide range of events and clubs, such as choir, drama and multi-sports where they develop their talents and interests.

Leaders take steps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care, can take full advantage of the wider curriculum offer.

Expected standard ●

Early years

Expected standard ●

Leaders are committed to children getting the best possible start through high-quality early years education and care. The opening of their 2-year-old 'little explorers' room has been a

positive development to ensure that children are set up for future learning well. The ambitious curriculum is designed with care to ensure that children build their knowledge in a range of experiences across the three classes. The sharp focus on developing communication skills is evident. Well-trained staff expand children's vocabulary through purposeful interactions. This helps children to secure the language that they need.

In the 2-year-old room and Nursery Year, children learn songs and rhymes and build their love of familiar stories. In the Reception Year, children are introduced to phonics from the start. Staff carefully check that children learn their letter sounds and begin to read swiftly. Children build their confidence in reading but do not consistently form their letters with the same level of accuracy and fluency. At times, this prevents a small number of children from being fully prepared for writing in Year 1.

Staff work well with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that children have the right help to progress in their learning. They build nurturing relationships with children and respond sensitively to their individual needs. This helps children feel safe and happy.

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

St Gerard's is a loving and welcoming school. Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging here. They enjoy positive relationships and are greeted each morning by staff who genuinely care and know them well. Pupils are happy to come to school, behave well and most attend regularly. They are safe and understand how the school protects them from risks in their community and online.

Pupils feel truly included and valued. They rise to the high expectations that staff have for them to become confident and successful learners. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, learn successfully, whatever their starting points. They work hard and develop a love of learning. Pupils' achievement in national tests at the end of key stage 2 is above the national average. Pupils are well prepared to meet the demands of secondary education.

Pupils experience success both academically and socially. This is due to the high-quality education and care that they receive. From the early years, children are taught to be independent and manage their emotions. Older pupils talk openly about their feelings. They appreciate how the nurturing support they receive helps them to deal with any worries they might have. Bullying is rare at this school. Pupils understand different types of bullying and they are confident that adults deal with issues effectively if they happen.

Pupils benefit from an array of enrichment activities that the school offers. For example, pupils develop their independence when they spend a night away from home on residential visits. They develop teamwork attending sports clubs and develop their cultural understanding when they attend theatre performances.

Parents and carers value the school. They appreciate that staff work in the best interests of their children. One parent reflected the views of many when they said the school 'brings out the very best in every child'.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed the recent changes to the mathematics curriculum so that more pupils consistently recall multiplication facts and perform in line with other subjects in national tests.
 - Leaders should strengthen their early years provision to ensure that children's foundational knowledge and skills for writing are mastered consistently so that they are fully prepared for Year 1.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Chambers.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character.

The school is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and had its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, in June 2023

The school runs a 2-year-old provision.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher : Karl Landrum

Lead inspector:

Emily Morris, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

David Deane, Ofsted Inspector

Linda Griffiths, 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 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

227

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

243

Close to 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)

50.50%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

0.88%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.86%

Close to 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	71%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	77%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	71%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	66%	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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	90%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

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	61%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	65%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	46%	44%	Close to average

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	76%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	82%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	76%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	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	69%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	76%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	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	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	61%	68%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	65%	69%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	67%	-1 pp
2022/23 (final)	46%	66%	-20 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	76%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	81%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	76%	80%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	69%	78%	-9 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	69%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (revised)	76%	78%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	62%	77%	-16 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	76%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	79%	-13 pp
2022/23 (final)	54%	79%	-25 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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	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)	14.8%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.7%	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.

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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