

St Bede's Catholic Academy

URN: 140442 | Inspected: 18 November 2025

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.

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve highly. They progress through the curriculum well from their individual starting points and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics shows a sustained upward trend in national tests and assessments. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is consistently above the national average. This demonstrates the school's success in securing equity of opportunity for all pupils. Leaders have removed barriers to learning through a clear and consistent approach to attendance and behaviour. In addition, the focus on ensuring that pupils gain a secure foundation in reading, writing, mathematics and communication means that gaps in knowledge are reduced swiftly. As a result, pupils are in school, ready to learn and able to produce high-quality work that prepares them well for their

next steps

in education. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, talk about what they have learned with accuracy across a wide range of subjects. They demonstrate important skills and knowledge, which help them to build their understanding of new concepts.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

The school's high-quality curriculum is regularly adapted and refined to ensure that all pupils receive the teaching they need to secure detailed knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are very successful in ensuring that the curriculum supports every learner, recognising their unique strengths and challenges. Teachers regularly check how well pupils understand what they have been taught. If any gaps or misunderstandings arise, teachers respond quickly with additional teaching and tailored support. This ensures that different groups of pupils catch up quickly. Staff model subject-specific vocabulary very well. Pupils then use this language in their written work and when explaining what they have learned. This supports staff to check how well pupils understand what they have learned. Where appropriate, teachers carefully adapt their delivery of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of important key concepts over time. Leaders work closely with staff to make sure that teaching is of a consistently high quality across all subjects and year groups. They understand how a pupils'

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learning experience is shaped by every teacher they encounter. Leaders recognise the importance of working with their staff team to ensure all adults have detailed subject-specific knowledge and skills.

Early years

Expected standard

Children in the early years benefit from a nurturing environment, where attendance, behaviour and language development are prioritised, laying secure foundations for future learning. Children learn the importance of being a good friend from day 1. The school's expectations are shared with parents and carers before children begin school. This establishes positive routines from the start. The early years team works closely with families to identify and address any needs or barriers that children may face. Wellbeing is prioritised, and the school's approach to behaviour is consistently embedded. Children behave with kindness and respect towards one another and towards adults. Children develop appropriate knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning. For example, in the Reception Year the purposeful teaching of early mathematics enables children to understand that a whole can be split into parts and those parts can be put back together to make the whole again. Children access well-structured phonics teaching. This helps them to learn the sounds that letters make from an early stage. Caring interactions between staff and children are evident. However, at times, these interactions do not help children to practise and extend their learning as well as they might.

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

St Bede's Catholic Academy offers pupils a warm welcome and a safe place to thrive within its aspirational and caring community. The school's motto, 'Hearts in Stockton, eyes on the world', reflects leaders' ambition for each pupil to take pride in their identity and heritage, while also embracing every opportunity to grow into confident global citizens. Pupils are safe because staff create an environment where pupils feel secure and supported. Pupils' behaviour across the school is extremely positive. Pupils treat one another with respect and kindness. Classrooms are calm, purposeful places, where learning can flourish. Bullying is extremely rare. When concerns do arise, leaders act promptly and effectively, ensuring that every pupil feels protected and valued. Pupils enjoy their learning and engage enthusiastically with the curriculum. Lessons are designed to inspire pupils' curiosity, build confidence and encourage resilience. Pupils progress through the curriculum very well. They are supported to set ambitious expectations for themselves and to take pride in their accomplishments. Leaders understand the barriers to achievement that different pupils may face. They work closely with their families to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, have the resources and support that they need to access learning alongside their peers. A strong moral and spiritual foundation underpins this work, helping pupils to grow into responsible, compassionate and resilient individuals. Leaders recognise the potential of each pupil. They provide a wealth of wider development opportunities. For example, pupils experience a residential visit to London. They also visit different universities and learn about being a student of higher education. Pupils grow in confidence and gain the knowledge and skills that they need to live in modern Britain. They are well prepared for life beyond the classroom.

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Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff maximise opportunities for high-quality interactions so that children in the early years develop secure communication and language skills.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Inclusion shines out through the school's work. It is a significant strength. Through simple actions, within each part of the school day and within the school's wider community, leaders demonstrate their unwavering commitment to supporting every pupil. The meaningful impact of the school's work is clear in the achievement of each pupil, regardless of their background or any barriers to learning they may face. Relationships between families and staff are positive. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the complex challenges faced by their community. Staff access high-quality training and are able to speak with insight and compassion about each pupil's individual journey. Leaders and the trust are resolute in their efforts to ensure that every pupil has access to the resources and opportunities that they need to thrive. Equity is not simply a goal, it is carefully monitored by school leaders. Provision across the school is carefully planned and precisely targeted. Pupil premium funding is thoughtfully managed to provide a wide range of targeted opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. Individual barriers to learning are identified and addressed with care. Consequently all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access learning in a caring environment, where they are valued, supported and empowered to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders, trust directors and members of the local governing committee have a precise and insightful understanding of their school and its community. They demonstrate a clear grasp of the school's strengths and priorities, which enables them to drive improvement effectively and support staff to access a range of professional development opportunities. Improvement priorities are underpinned by a clear rationale. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for staff to collaborate in setting these priorities. Staff value this process. Trustees ensure that well-established systems enable information to be shared seamlessly between leaders, local governors and the the diocese. Governors and trustees use their knowledge and expertise to provide support and challenge to school leaders, while ensuring the wellbeing and workload of staff is carefully considered. Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties. Leaders continually assess the school's performance and use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of their work. They identify, monitor and act on priorities with precision, leading to consistently high standards of education. When improvement is required, leaders take decisive action to secure rapid change. For instance, their recently increased focus on language and oracy in the school development plan is broadening opportunities for children to strengthen their vocabulary and communication skills in the early years.

St Bede's Catholic Academy

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Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Pupils benefit from a rich personal development curriculum. This supports them to understand the different challenges that they may face now and in the future. Pupils are knowledgeable across a wide range of issues. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and within their local community. The school's relationships and sex education and health education equips pupils with essential knowledge. They are able to speak with maturity about topics, such as how their bodies change as they grow and what it means to be a good friend. Leaders work well with external professionals, including the police, to ensure that the personal development programme reflects the school's context. Leaders are ambitious in their desire to raise pupils' aspirations. They enjoy trips to local and national events, take part in sporting competitions and have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Carefully planned partnerships with internationally renowned universities help disadvantaged pupils and their families to understand higher education and the opportunities it offers. Pupils know that hard work is key to achieving their dreams, and they take pride in sharing their future career hopes, whether as doctors, mechanics or astrophysicists. Pupils live out their understanding of fundamental British values through their behaviour and respect for one another. They demonstrate tolerance and sensitivity when learning about world faiths.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour Exceptional

Leaders have overcome significant challenges, in an area of high deprivation, to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and flourish across all areas of school life. From the Nursery Year onwards, the attendance of all pupils is of the highest priority. The school also supports other schools locally and nationally, to transform the attendance of their pupils. The school's tracking shows that over 90% of pupils have at least one vulnerability. The school helps these pupils to attend school every day, with many pupils needing support in a range of areas. Despite these barriers, above-average rates of attendance have been sustained over time. The attendance of all pupil groups is high. Punctuality is important, which means pupils arrive on time and ready to learn. Pupils' behaviour across the school is impressive. If bullying should occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils can clearly articulate what it means to behave as a St Bede's pupil and they take huge pride in meeting these expectations. The school's highly inclusive culture gives pupils the tools that they need to behave in a calm, orderly and respectful manner. This supports them to succeed academically and in their personal development. A small proportion of pupils receive effective additional layers of tailored support to help them make positive choices. Highly skilled staff care for pupils and follow the behaviour policy consistently well. Strong standard

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

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<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/st-bedes-catholic-academy-stockton-on-tees>