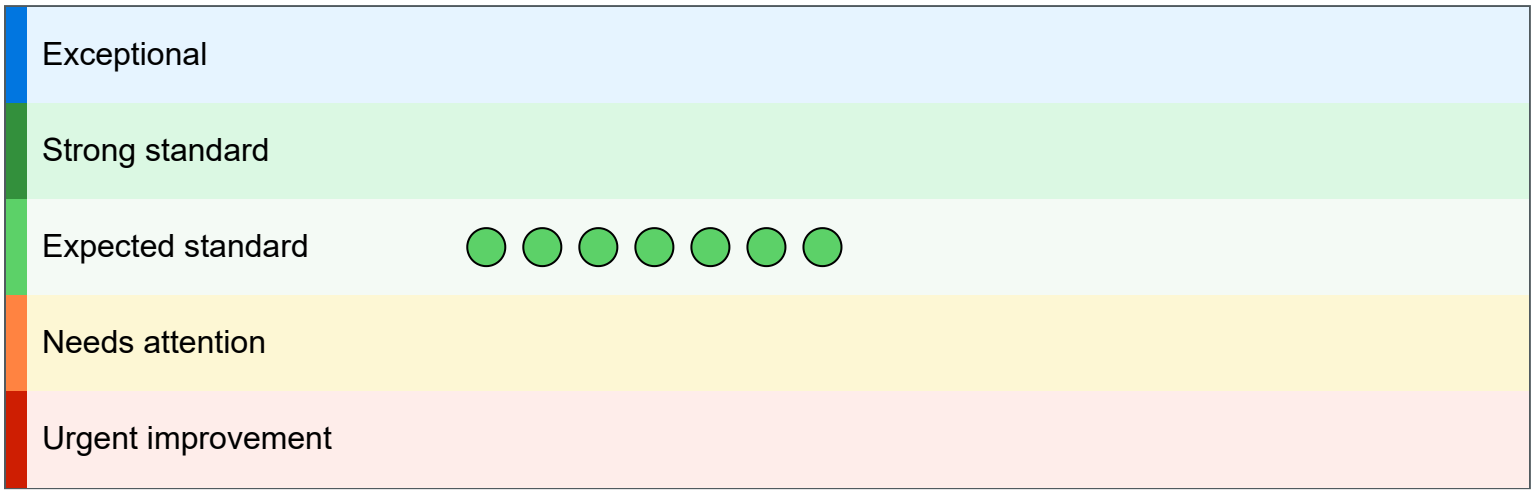
St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Address: Slater Lane, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 1TL

Unique reference number (URN): 119578

Inspection report: 29 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are typically well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils attain well in mathematics and reading in national assessments. However, their achievement in writing is less secure, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have identified this as a priority, and their actions are having a positive impact on the quality of writing produced by current pupils.

Handwriting is taught consistently well across the school. As a result, pupils typically develop increasing fluency and presentation skills, supporting the quality of writing across the curriculum.

In the early years, most children secure the phonics knowledge, writing skills and mathematical understanding needed to be ready for Year 1. Pupils who require additional support, including those who do not pass the phonics screening check, receive targeted intervention. This helps them close gaps in their learning and catch up with their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make secure progress against their starting points and work successfully towards the targets outlined in their individual learning programmes.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders make sure that attendance is a priority. They make thorough checks to ensure that they identify absences quickly. Leaders use a range of strategies to support pupils to attend, including adaptations to the school day, reward schemes and targeted support for families. Where needed, they draw on advice and guidance from external agencies. Leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality is having a positive impact. As a result, overall attendance is typically in line with national averages. Persistent absence is reducing, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Consequently, these pupils benefit both academically and socially because they spend more time in school. Leaders continue to work to secure further improvements in attendance.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff model calm and respectful relationships. They provide skilful support to help pupils manage their emotions and make appropriate choices. Typically, pupils rise to these expectations. They enjoy learning, work cooperatively and demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and around the school. Incidents of bullying and unkind behaviour are rare. When concerns arise, leaders take prompt and effective action to resolve them. On the playground, pupils of all ages play well together. Older pupils act as mature and responsible ambassadors for younger pupils and contribute positively to the school community.

Leaders use suspensions appropriately and only where necessary. The number of suspensions has reduced significantly, reflecting the positive impact of leaders' personalised support in reducing barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school has developed a well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have identified the most important skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember over time.

Reading, writing and mathematics sit at the heart of the curriculum and of the school's work. Leaders prioritise early reading and ensure that staff receive the training and coaching they need to teach daily phonics consistently and effectively. A carefully tailored programme of staff training ensures that staff have the confidence and expertise to deliver all subjects well. Leaders have established a shared approach to teaching that promotes consistency in pupils' learning experiences.

Positive relationships and high expectations underpin classroom practice at St Anne's. Teachers typically explain concepts clearly and make effective use of questioning and modelling to support learning. They focus on developing pupils' speaking skills and subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, most pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned. Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively. They identify and address misconceptions swiftly. This helps them provide targeted support to address gaps in learning.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Teachers adapt learning precisely, breaking it into manageable steps and providing resources to aid understanding. This enables pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise helping children get off to a positive start in the early years. Staff begin getting to know children and their families before they start school. This helps children settle quickly into a welcoming and nurturing environment where they feel safe, confident and ready to learn. A well-sequenced curriculum supports children to build knowledge and skills from their starting points and prepares them well for key stage 1. Leaders place a clear emphasis on communication, language and physical development. Daily phonics and early mathematics are taught effectively. This helps children build secure foundations for future learning.

Leaders prioritise high-quality interactions between children and staff. Staff typically use effective questioning to explore children's thinking and build communication skills. As a result, children engage confidently in conversations and steadily build their vocabulary. The outdoor provision offers rich opportunities for physical development, investigation and imaginative play. Children collaborate well and understand the importance of sharing and taking turns.

Children who need additional support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully included in school life. Staff use appropriate strategies, including visual prompts and communication tools, to support learning and independence. Children have access to quiet regulation spaces if needed. Staff work closely with families and external

professionals to understand children's needs and plan the right support. As a result, children access the curriculum successfully and make progress from their starting points.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders recognise the barriers to learning and wellbeing that some pupils face and act swiftly to reduce them. They prioritise emotional wellbeing for all. Routines, including daily emotional check-ins, help pupils feel supported and ready to learn. Leaders personalise provision effectively for vulnerable pupils, enabling them to participate fully in school life.

Staff use detailed information about pupils' needs to adapt learning appropriately. Leaders ensure that staff have the expertise required to implement effective strategies. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally learn alongside their peers and access the same ambitious curriculum with suitable adaptations and adjustments.

Leaders carefully track pupils' progress through the curriculum and respond quickly to changing needs. Leaders regularly review the effectiveness of support and use pupils' views to understand their experiences and improve provision further. This helps support to remain relevant and responsive to individual circumstances.

The school is ambitious for pupils who are known or previously known to social care. These pupils are well supported and nurtured so that they can learn and thrive alongside their peers. Leaders use additional funding effectively to address the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. They prioritise academic and pastoral support. This helps disadvantaged pupils to attend regularly and engage positively in education.

Leaders' actions ensure that pupils participate in all that the school has to offer, including residential visits and extra-curricular clubs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are ambitious for all pupils and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. Leaders keep pupils' needs at the centre of their decision-making and evaluate the impact of their work thoughtfully. They have taken decisive action to improve aspects of the school's work, including developing pupils’ spoken language skills and maintaining a relentless focus on improving attendance.

Governors work well with leaders, staff and pupils. They provide effective support and robust challenge. Regular visits help governors to see learning in action and deepen their understanding of the curriculum and its impact. They use reports from leaders and other professionals to guide their conversations in school with pupils and staff. Governors feel valued and are proud to serve the school and its community. They maintain high expectations and contribute positively to the school's ongoing development. Governors fulfil their legal duties effectively.

Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing. Alongside governors, they create a supportive working environment. Staff receive regular professional development opportunities that help them develop their practice. This helps staff understand the leaders’

expectations and contributes to a shared and consistent approach across the school. Staff feel well supported and listened to. They are unanimously proud to work at the school and see leaders as excellent role models.

Typically, parents and carers speak highly of leaders' accessibility and the relationships that have been built. Parents describe the school as welcoming and nurturing. Leaders engage well with a range of external agencies and community organisations for the benefit of pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Pupils benefit from a well-structured personal development and wellbeing programme. It reflects the school's context and includes appropriate relationships, health and sex education. It makes a positive difference to pupils and enables them to grow into confident, thoughtful and socially-aware young people.

Leaders ensure that teaching about relationships, body changes and personal boundaries is age-appropriate and helps pupils understand these topics with confidence. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They benefit from a range of experiences, including 'Bikeability', road safety projects, fire safety sessions and swimming lessons from the Nursery Year to Year 6.

Pupils know how to stay safe online. They understand the risks associated with social media and how to report cyberbullying. They are also aware of artificial intelligence and some of the risks associated with generated content. As a result, pupils are well prepared to navigate modern life safely and responsibly.

Pupils show an interest in the world around them. They benefit from opportunities to explore their local area and its history. Pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They discuss topics such as immigration and diversity thoughtfully and understand the importance of treating others with tolerance and respect.

Pupils value the many leadership opportunities available to them. They thrive as school council members, faith leaders or eco warriors. Leaders ensure that clubs and activities reflect pupils' interests and views. Pupils benefit from residential trips that help to build resilience and independence. Leaders carefully track participation to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those eligible for pupil premium funding, can take part.

Well-considered pastoral support helps to remove barriers to pupils' social and emotional development. The high-quality support has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and that of parents and carers. The school's 'Oasis Room' is available throughout the day. It is a haven for pupils who at times become overwhelmed or anxious. When needed, leaders work with external agencies to provide support for pupils who need additional help with their wellbeing. They make sure that pupils receive timely support from the right services.

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

Pupils get off to a positive start at St Anne's. Staff greet pupils with a cheerful 'good morning' and a smile. There are key staff on hand to support any pupils who might need emotional support or reassurance to help them enter school. Pupils arrive in class ready for learning. They rightly feel safe and cared for.

Attendance and punctuality are recognised and celebrated. Pupils want to attend well because they enjoy learning. They learn in calm and purposeful classrooms. Pupils try their best and take pride in their work. They appreciate the recognition they receive for their positive conduct and learning. Staff provide effective support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions. This helps all pupils to learn in a settled environment.

A sharp focus on reading, writing, communication and mathematics helps pupils secure important knowledge and skills from the early years onwards. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their vibrant, well-stocked library where 'books take you to other worlds'. They access high-quality texts. There is something for everyone.

At breaktimes, pupils play enthusiastically in 'St Anne's Park', where they can read, run, act, climb and shoot hoops. They value free time together. Relationships are warm, positive and constructive. Leaders and staff deal with any friendship issues or potential bullying swiftly.

Through many leadership roles, pupils are encouraged to listen to others, collaborate and value different opinions. Older pupils are excellent role models to their Reception buddies. They fulfil this responsibility with genuine joy, kindness and positivity. These opportunities help them to develop confidence and teamwork and to feel proud to be part of the school community.

Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those with barriers to learning or wellbeing progress well from their starting points. Most pupils reach national expectations by the end of Year 6. They leave ready for the challenges of secondary school.

Next steps

- Leaders should further refine their work to support disadvantaged pupils' learning, particularly in writing, so that disadvantaged pupils attain well and are ready for the next steps in their education.
- Leaders should embed their use of the information that they hold about pupils' barriers to regular attendance at school, so that rates of persistent absence continue to reduce, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is John Mills.

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

This inspection took place on 29 and 30 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 headteacher, other school leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the archdiocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is a Roman Catholic, voluntary aided school. The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in December 2023.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school provides before and after school care. The school has a nursery.

Headteacher: Elizabeth Darnell

Lead inspector:
Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Trish Merritt, Ofsted Inspector
Alison Lawson, 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 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

189
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

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)

31.22%
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

2.12%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.69%

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	33%	61%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	67%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	59%	73%	Below

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	38%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30%	46%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	38%	69%	-32 pp
2023/24 (final)	30%	67%	-37 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	80%	80%	0 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	38%	78%	-41 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	78%	-38 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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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
2025/26 (1 term)	4.2%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	11.3%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	10.1%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.5%	14.6%	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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright