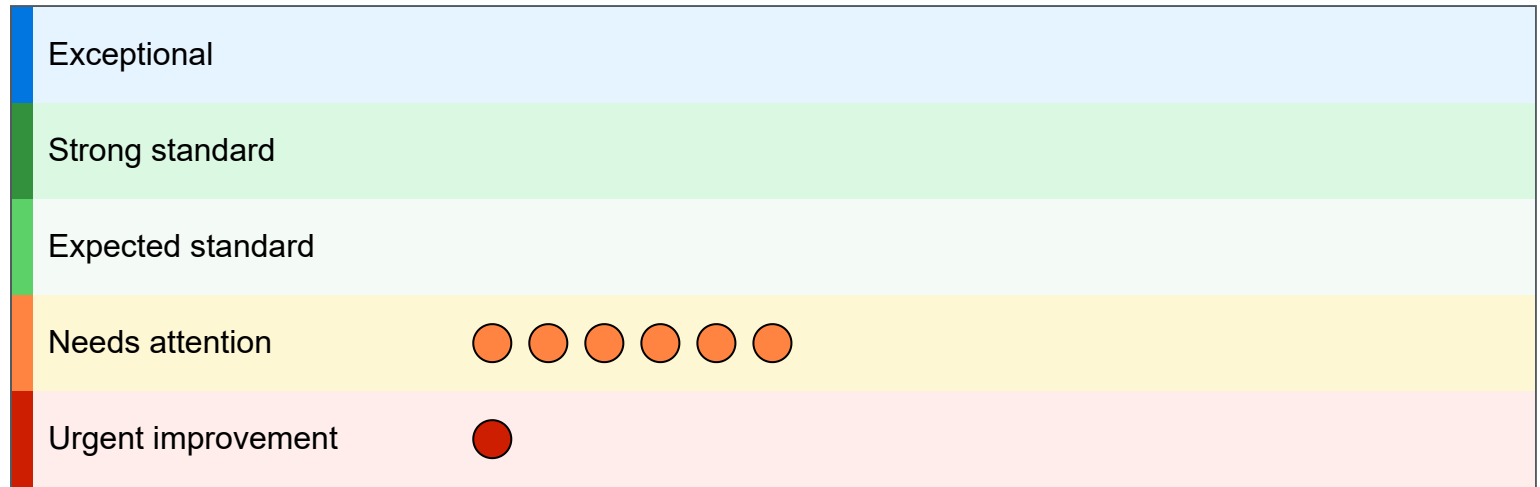


Notre Dame RC School

Address: Looseleigh Lane, Derriford, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 5HN

Unique reference number (URN): 140737

Inspection report: 25 February 2026



⊗ Safeguarding standards not met

Leaders have not ensured that there is an open and positive culture around safeguarding. This puts pupils at significant risk of harm. For example, when allegations are made against an adult in school, leaders do not act quickly enough or ensure that appropriate processes are followed at every stage of the investigation. Despite further training for staff, mistakes and poor record-keeping persist.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. However, many pupils say they would not report their concerns to an adult in school for fear of not being believed, or that insufficient action would be taken.

Leaders do not track the type and frequency of safeguarding concerns in school. Therefore, they are not aware of any patterns or trends where they might need to take decisive action. The records that leaders maintain around safeguarding concerns are weak. Often, they fail to include the specific actions taken by the school to ensure that pupils are being kept safe.

Leaders follow appropriate safer recruitment processes when employing new staff. Leaders carry out their responsibilities to make referrals to other agencies when they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil in school. Pupils facing barriers to their wellbeing generally receive the support they need to stay 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.

⊗ This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils do not achieve consistently well. This is evident in the school's published data over time. There is some progress being made. For instance, the school has improved the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, there are widespread gaps in knowledge for

many pupils. These are evident in the quality of pupils' work and their responses in lessons. They are especially apparent for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those that are disadvantaged. This means that many pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not achieve well enough from their starting points.

Leaders have set up several approaches designed to help pupils to close their gaps in knowledge. However, for many pupils, these are not closing quickly enough. Therefore, weaknesses in the accuracy of the work that some pupils produce remain, as do the gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND are well supported to develop life skills for adulthood.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Pupils' overall attendance rates remain persistently below the national average. Although there is evidence of some improvement, this has not been sustained over time. Many pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those that are disadvantaged, are absent from school frequently. Leaders are taking appropriate action to raise the school community's understanding of the importance of regular attendance. This has started to have a positive impact in reducing the absence of some pupils.

Some bullying incidents do occur. Although leaders generally deal effectively with these, some pupils still do not have confidence that staff will act on concerns that they raise. At social times, some pupils display silly or undesirable behaviours. Leaders have increased the number and placement of staff on duty to tackle this issue. This is leading to an improvement in behaviour at unstructured times.

On occasion, low-level disruption disturbs lessons. This is most frequent when a teacher not known to pupils is leading the lesson. However, pupils generally work well and concentrate in lessons. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Staff know and mostly apply the recently strengthened behaviour policy. Leaders make appropriate adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as required. The number of pupils receiving suspensions from school is reducing.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The effectiveness of classroom teaching is highly variable. Where teachers' explanations are strong and modelling is effective, pupils learn well. However, where practice, including the use of assessment strategies, is weaker, pupils develop misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge persist. This is most prevalent for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those that are disadvantaged. Teachers do not consistently draw on their knowledge of pupils' starting points when designing what to teach next.

Staff do make adaptations to their teaching in light of pupils' needs. However, this practice is not consistent. On some occasions, these adaptations are not well matched to what pupils need. Pupils' barriers to learning are often not reduced or removed. In some cases, adaptations that are made actually isolate pupils from their peers and prevent them from fully engaging in the learning.

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and its delivery. They have extended the key stage 3 curriculum so that pupils study a broader range of subjects for longer. Leaders have considered what they want pupils to learn and a logical order in which to teach it. Across subjects, the content is suitably ambitious. Teachers have sufficient expertise in their subjects. There is a professional learning plan that is aligned to the priorities that leaders have identified.

Inclusion

Needs attention ●

Although the school has clear systems for identifying pupils' needs, including how these might change over time, there is inconsistency in how regularly pupils' progress is reviewed. Therefore, timely changes to support sometimes do not take place. This stalls pupils' progress.

Staff have received training in how to meet pupils' needs. However, the impact of this training is not consistently positive. High levels of supply staff and inconsistent staff practice mean that the strategies to meet pupils' needs are not used effectively enough.

Leaders use appropriate evidence to inform their strategy to support disadvantaged pupils. There are early signs of some positive impact, such as an improvement in the attainment for these pupils. However, other challenges, such as low attendance rates, persist.

Leaders provide appropriate pastoral support for pupils when there are long waits for external assessments. This includes counselling, access to mentoring and access to a qualified wellbeing practitioner.

The school has recently opened a specially resourced provision for a small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders consider the views of experts in this field to ensure that the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of these pupils.

The school uses some alternative provision. These are selected in the best interests of pupils, and appropriate checks take place on their suitability.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention ●

Leaders ensure that there is a suitable curriculum for pupils' personal development that covers important strands such as health and wellbeing, online safety and living in the wider world. However, some areas are not explored fully. For example, pupils are not clearly signposted to where they can access mental health support. Additionally, there are not effective systems in place to check pupils' recall and understanding of what they have learned. Therefore, many pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge of topics including fundamental British values and healthy relationships. These weaknesses are having a negative impact on how well pupils, and students in the sixth form, are prepared for adulthood and life in modern Britain.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and experiences. They learn about different religions and develop an appreciation of cultural diversity. For example, the school runs a 'culture and respect week' where pupils try different traditional foods and complete a

language detective challenge. Leaders have started to link the school's behaviour expectations with developing pupils' understanding of virtue and character development.

Leaders have put in place a suitable careers and guidance programme. For example, pupils attend 'Future Friday' assemblies and listen to visiting speakers from different industries, such as a construction company. Pupils in Year 10 have the opportunity to visit different universities. These experiences raise pupils' aspirations and support them to consider different potential educational and career pathways. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are prioritised in this work.

Pupils benefit from trips and visits outside of school, for example a women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics trip to a nuclear dockyard and a geography field trip to Iceland. Pupils also have access to some opportunities to develop their talents and interests through school clubs including sports, art, drama and technology. Leaders have started to track participation in these activities, but this work is in its infancy.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Overall, students in the sixth form do not achieve well enough. This is reflected in published data, where several measures are below the national average over time. Leaders have started to make improvements, but this work is at an early stage.

Leaders have put in place a suitable 16-19 programme that is designed to meet students' needs and future aspirations. The curriculum is generally well sequenced and constructed to build on students' prior knowledge and understanding. However, the implementation of the curriculum is variable in quality. For example, assessment information is often not used well enough to identify and remedy gaps in students' understanding.

There is a suitable programme of non-academic activities. For example, in enrichment time, Year 12 pupils follow a 'skills for life' programme linked to faith. Students learn about their impact as future citizens, such as through charity events. Students have a range of leadership and volunteering activities with lower school, such as being involved in bereavement support and mentoring. However, leaders do not track students' participation in enrichment precisely enough to be assured that all students benefit fully.

Students receive appropriate advice and guidance to prepare them for their next steps. They complete work experience and are supported in any university applications.

Urgent improvement

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement 

Leaders, and those responsible for governance, have not identified the scale of concerns around safeguarding practice at the school. As a result, they have not taken actions to resolve these deficits. Although leaders provide suitable safeguarding training to staff, they have not tackled ineffective practice where it has occurred. Leaders have not learned sufficiently from mistakes that have been made.

Leaders have not secured the confidence and trust of pupils. Too many describe feeling unsafe and unwilling to report any concerns that they have. In failing to ensure their safety, leaders have not acted in pupils' best interests. This places all pupils, but particularly the most vulnerable, at potential risk of harm.

Those responsible for governance have failed in their statutory duty to ensure that the safeguarding standards are met. They hold leaders to account in relation to managing resources and provide suitable challenge around other priority areas, such as attendance.

Leaders have a more accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for development in other aspects of the school, for example in curriculum, teaching and achievement. Leaders have put in place an appropriate professional learning programme for staff. This is focused on the areas for development that they have identified within teaching, such as the use of assessment. Early career teachers follow a coherent framework that builds their expertise over time.

Leaders support the wellbeing of staff at the school effectively. They consider the impact of the decisions that they make on a potential increase in staff's workload. They take steps to mitigate this, which are appreciated by staff.

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

Leaders have not taken sufficient action to resolve weaknesses in safeguarding, particularly around the management of allegations against staff. As a result, pupils are at significant risk of harm. Many pupils describe not having trusted adults they can confide in. Some pupils are reluctant to report concerns they may have about adults, or incidents of bullying, as they fear they may not be believed or that action will not be taken. For some pupils, this means they do not feel safe in school.

Variability in how the curriculum is taught means that some do not achieve as well as they could. Despite this, many pupils enjoy their learning. For some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those that are disadvantaged, barriers to their learning are well understood and adaptations successfully made. This enables them to make suitable progress from their starting points. However, this is not the experience for all pupils.

Many pupils behave well and meet the expectations of the school's recently strengthened behaviour policy. However, this is not consistent across the school. Some poor behaviour in lessons and at social times persists. This is most common where there is staff absence, and pupils have teachers they do not know as well. Bullying incidents do occur, though not frequently, but some pupils, parents and carers feel that these are not managed quickly and effectively enough. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Pupils benefit from a range of broader experiences. For example, there are trips to places such as a theme park in Paris and the opportunity for students in the sixth form to visit a local care home and engage with the residents. Some pupils take on roles, such as being form and year group representatives, which gives them a voice for change at the school. Pupils who have sadly experienced bereavement are well supported through the school's

'Kaleidoscope' group, which has achieved national recognition. Even so, the school's provision for pupils' personal development does not equip them well enough for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance must implement clear and effective processes to review safeguarding practices and reflect on incidents, so that leaders are able to learn and swiftly strengthen practices where required, thus ensuring that pupils are safe.
 - Leaders must urgently take steps to reassure pupils that all concerns that they raise to adults are listened to and appropriate action is taken, so that pupils feel safe.
 - Leaders and those responsible for governance must urgently review their policies and practices about responding to allegations against adults. This is required so that all staff are clear of their responsibilities and act according to policy. Leaders should also ensure that their response to allegations, including when working with other appropriate authorities, is timely, comprehensive and prioritises the safety of pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are consistently identified so that the curriculum can be well matched to their starting points and pupils are able to achieve highly.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils understand and remember the important content within the personal development curriculum, so that pupils are well prepared for adult life in modern Britain.
 - Leaders should strengthen their monitoring of the impact of their work to improve the educational experiences of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are disadvantaged or have other barriers to learning.
 - Leaders should carefully analyse and evaluate the impact that their attendance strategy is having on reducing the absence of pupils. They should take swift action to adjust strategies where needed to raise the attendance of pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that the actions taken to improve the quality of the post-16 provision are embedded to swiftly and effectively raise the attainment of pupils.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Plymouth CAST, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth O'Donovan.

The inspection began on 25 February 2026 as a focused monitoring inspection. The inspection was deemed a full inspection. As a full inspection requires more time to complete than a focused monitoring inspection, we returned on 26 February 2026 to complete the full inspection. The focused monitoring inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. His Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were

raised. Inspectors sought to understand whether leaders had established an effective safeguarding culture.

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 school and trust leaders. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff and representatives of the trust board.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to these allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' evaluations.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The last section 48 inspection was carried out by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate in June 2025.

The school makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

This school is for girls in Year 7 through to Year 11, with boys admitted to the sixth form.

Executive Headteacher: Michael Antram

Lead inspector:

Kelly Olive, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sara Berry, His Majesty's Inspector

Tracey Reynolds, His Majesty's Inspector


Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector

James Oldham, His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Favager-Dalton, 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 25 February 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

732

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: 1,067

School capacity

900

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

27.27%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 28.9%

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

3.96%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

20.36%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below 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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	33.6%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.4%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.1%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	43.3	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.9	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.27	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.31	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	15.2%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	10.0%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.8	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.9	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.76	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.85	-0.57	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	15.2%	53.1%	-38.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	10.0%	53.1%	-43.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	52.4%	-34.9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	37.8	50.4	-12.6
2023/24 (final)	30.5	50.0	-19.5
2022/23 (final)	32.9	50.3	-17.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.76	0.16	-0.92
2022/23 (final)	-0.85	0.17	-1.01

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	27.65	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	24.68	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.42	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.4	0.0	Below

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)	10.8%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.2%	9.0%	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)	29.8%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	36.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	34.3%	26.5%	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.

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