

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

Address: Marsh Lane, London, E10 7BL

Unique reference number (URN): 103090

Inspection report: 15 April 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, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 are in line with, or above, national averages. Where year-on-year variation occurs, it reflects the changing profile and complexity of cohorts in a small school rather than any inconsistency in provision.

Pupils' work provides clear evidence of secure progression across writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum. Work shows increasing accuracy, independence and reasoning over time. It also demonstrates excellent presentation and depth of understanding. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 2 confidently apply part-whole models to support addition and subtraction. In the wider curriculum, pupils build knowledge progressively, such as identifying physical features accurately in geography and explaining evaluative views about life in the past in history. As a result, pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. They develop positive learning habits and the confidence to apply what they know independently.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide clear and strategic oversight of attendance. Expectations are well understood by staff, parents and carers and pupils. Leaders balance sensitivity to individual circumstances with a clear message that absence is not accepted unless there are exceptional reasons. Attendance for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils is consistently above national averages over time. Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has varied recently, due to difficult circumstances that have a greater impact within a small school. Leaders respond promptly and persistently to attendance concerns, working closely with relevant external partners where needed. Attendance is monitored carefully, with pupils' welfare at the core of leaders' work. This also includes home visits when appropriate.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are calm, respectful and consistent. Routines are well embedded from the earliest years. Pupils move sensibly around the school, follow instructions and remain focused during assemblies and learning activities. Staff model expectations and reinforce what readiness for learning looks like. Behaviour is inclusive and caring, with appropriate adjustments made for pupils with SEND. Staff address any low-level behaviour quickly to prevent escalation. Any rare incidents are reviewed and immediately followed up. Pupils feel safe, supported and well cared for. As a result, the school has a positive culture in which pupils demonstrate pride in their community and respect for others.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Learning is carefully sequenced so that pupils' build knowledge over time from the early years. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders place a high priority on reading and language from Nursery. Staff receive appropriate training and use shared approaches across the school. Teachers model language carefully and use repetition to help pupils remember key learning. This supports all pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. Consistent teaching of sounds and tricky words across the school supports pupils' early reading development highly effectively.

The school secures firm foundations in writing and mathematics. Teaching ensures that pupils develop handwriting, spelling and sentence structure from an early age. Teachers skilfully select learning activities and resources to support learning, such as the use of practical tasks and visual resources in mathematics. They introduce new learning in small steps and revisit earlier concepts to embed essential knowledge. Teachers support pupils to use correct vocabulary and explain their thinking clearly. For example, when discussing measurement in mathematics.

Teaching is inclusive and well adapted. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who need extra help, benefit from timely support and targeted teaching.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders design early years provision carefully. They know children well and respond to individual needs effectively. Daily routines are clear and consistent. Resources are well chosen and support learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum is ambitious and sequenced well from the two-year-old provision to Reception. It builds children's knowledge and skills steadily over time. Children learn through purposeful play. For example, they develop early mathematics knowledge and language while building with construction materials or using playdough in role-play to make pizzas. Outdoor learning enhances the curriculum further, including opportunities to explore number, nature and physical development.

Teaching is purposeful and responsive. Staff model language clearly and introduce new vocabulary during play and routines. In Reception, phonics teaching follows a consistent approach. Daily sessions help children recognise sounds and build early reading skills. Staff promote early writing through well-planned mark making and fine-motor activities.

Children achieve well. They become confident, independent learners. For example, at snack time, children in Reception choose their fruit and match it to a numbered self-registration board. This supports independence and decision-making. Transitions into Year 1 are planned carefully so that children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Children's wellbeing is a priority. Calm routines, quiet spaces and sensitive support help children feel safe. Inclusive practice ensures all children access learning and develop socially and emotionally.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders create a welcoming and inclusive culture where every child matters. From Nursery onwards, staff identify pupils' needs quickly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils, and those who are known or were previously known to children's social care. Leaders work closely with families and outside professionals so that support is well matched to each child. This helps pupils feel safe, confident and included.

Staff remove barriers to learning and wellbeing through careful support in lessons and around school. Pupils with SEND benefit from calm spaces, specialist help and clear routines. Highly effective support meets pupils' sensory, communication and physical needs. As a result, pupils feel settled and ready to learn.

Leaders carefully check pupils' progress. They review how well support is working and make changes when needed. Teachers adapt learning so pupils with SEND can take part fully and achieve alongside their peers. Staff also skilfully support pupils who speak little or no English through clear explanations and modelling.

The school uses additional funding well to provide extra support for pupils who need it. This support helps pupils overcome barriers to learning and supports their wellbeing and progress. When needed, leaders use alternative provision. This is chosen carefully and reviewed regularly so it meets pupils' needs and helps them stay engaged with learning.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders are ambitious for the school and the community it serves. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Leaders share a clear vision and set high expectations for all pupils. A values-led culture promotes kindness, fairness and integrity. This shapes pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a result, outcomes are in line with, or above, national averages over time. This reflects leaders' ongoing focus on teaching quality, inclusion and consistency.

School leaders and governors are aspirational for every child, including disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils previously known to children's social care. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests. Leaders focus on removing barriers to learning and wellbeing. A thoughtfully sequenced curriculum and clear teaching approaches help pupils to achieve highly.

Professional development supports continuous improvement. Leaders ensure staff access a high-quality, evidence-informed programme of training. This includes subject knowledge, safeguarding and collaborative opportunities. As a result, staff develop confidence and expertise and adapt their teaching effectively to meet pupils' needs.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory responsibilities securely. Governors provide support and challenge, particularly in relation to finance and sustainability. They hold leaders to account and contribute to ongoing improvement.

Leaders and governors prioritise staff wellbeing. Workload is managed carefully and communication is open. Staff feel valued and supported. Parents and carers speak positively about the school and the care it provides for their children.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders place personal development and wellbeing at the heart of the school's work. They provide clear strategic direction and design a well-sequenced programme that supports pupils' personal growth. As a result, pupils develop confidence, resilience and a strong sense of self. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain and for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum gives pupils regular opportunities to develop personally, including their social skills. Staff use consistent routines and a shared approach. Pupils learn to recognise and manage their emotions and know how to ask for help. Pupil leadership is a strength. For example, the wellbeing warriors lead initiatives such as a friendship club and a buddy bus stop. This promotes inclusion and positive relationships across the school.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, which includes relationships education, is age-appropriate and well matched to pupils' needs. Weekly lessons teach pupils about healthy lifestyles, safety and relationships. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and offline and can explain what they would do in an emergency, such as a fire. They recognise risks, including bullying, and know how to report concerns. Precise teaching about respectful relationships supports this. Pupils consistently show kindness and consideration towards others.

Leaders promote fundamental British values through the curriculum and wider school life. Pupils learn about democracy through voting for school roles and show respect for different faiths and cultures. Assemblies and events help pupils understand difference and develop tolerance.

The school ensures that all pupils can take part fully in personal development opportunities. Leaders track engagement carefully and remove barriers for pupils who need additional support. Enrichment activities and trips broaden pupils' experiences and raise aspirations.

Pastoral provision is highly effective. Staff know pupils well and work closely with families to provide timely support. Workshops and external services help parents to support their children's wellbeing.

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

Pupils are greeted each morning with warmth and positivity. They describe the school as a kind, safe and welcoming place where they feel valued. Pupils consistently behave well and show consideration for one another. Staff deal promptly and effectively with any unkind behaviour. This helps pupils to feel secure.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They approach lessons with positive attitudes and want to do well. Children in the early years settle quickly. They benefit from clear routines and purposeful activities that build confidence and independence. As pupils move through the school, they deepen their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They are very well prepared for the transition to the junior school.

Pupils value the relationships they have with staff. They describe teachers as caring and helpful and staff know them well. Pupils feel confident to speak to trusted adults at school if they have a worry or concern. These nurturing relationships help to reduce barriers to pupils' wellbeing and support regular attendance.

Pupils feel that they belong. They enjoy learning and playing alongside their friends and take pride in the responsibilities they are given. Pupils contribute meaningfully to school life through roles such as house captains and school councillors. They explain how these roles help others and allow them to make a positive difference.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about trips and visits to farms, places of worship, sports events and local businesses. These experiences deepen learning in subjects such as design technology and personal, social and health education. They also strengthen pupils' social skills and engagement with the wider world.

Overall, pupils experience school as a place where they feel safe, supported and happy. They enjoy learning, are included fully in school life and grow in confidence, responsibility and kindness each day.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that consistently high outcomes, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are sustained.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Alison Doyle.

The school is part of a federation called The Federated Schools of St Joseph's Catholic Infants and St Joseph's Catholic Juniors.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the governing body, as well as a representative from the diocese and local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Since September 2024 the school runs provision for 2-year-olds.

The school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Brentwood. Its last section 48 inspection was March 2025.

The school currently makes use of 1 alternative provision.

Headteacher: Merryl D'Souza

Lead inspector:

Karen Kent, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

David Worrall, 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 15 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

128

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: 272

School capacity

180

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.14%

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: 26.3%

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

3.91%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.84%

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

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).

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)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.1%	5.9%	Below

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)	15.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.0%	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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