

St Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School

Address: Hale Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L4 3RL

Unique reference number (URN): 104650

Inspection report: 24 February 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders' work to improve attendance is effective. They analyse patterns closely and use this information to shape targeted support, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Staff act quickly when concerns about attendance emerge. They work with pupils' families to remove barriers to regular attendance. As a result, attendance is improving. Leaders know that attendance for a minority of pupils remains too low. They have clear, credible plans to secure further improvement and are taking appropriate action to ensure that these pupils attend more regularly.

The standard of behaviour across the school is consistently high. Leaders set very clear expectations, and pupils rise to these in lessons and around the school. Classrooms are calm, orderly and purposeful. This enables pupils to focus on learning without distraction. Pupils conduct themselves with maturity and consideration for others. Staff apply behaviour policies fairly and consistently. They know pupils well and make reasonable adjustments for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or other additional needs. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. When incidents occur, they are addressed quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and speak confidently about the support they receive. While suspensions have been high in the past, leaders use them appropriately.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious, broad and balanced. Each subject is well sequenced so that pupils can build on what they have already learned. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and its delivery. They make decisions, informed by research, to refine teaching. For instance, leaders ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of vocabulary in each subject. This helps to ensure that pupils learn all they need to know to prepare them for their next steps.

Leaders ensure that staff have the subject knowledge required to teach well. Training in early reading, mathematics and language development ensures that younger pupils, and those who need support to catch up, receive teaching that secures this important knowledge. However, sometimes, teaching is not targeted precisely enough to support the small number of pupils who find handwriting and spelling more difficult. Reading is taught effectively, with well-matched texts that help pupils develop fluency and confidence.

Staff know pupils' needs very well. They adapt teaching appropriately for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Clear explanations, precise modelling and consistent routines help pupils focus on new learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to revisit important content and extend pupils' spoken and written vocabulary. Leaders ensure that their high expectations are translated into high-quality classroom practice across the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders make sure that every pupil feels a strong sense of belonging to the school. They identify pupils' needs early. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff check what each pupil needs so that they can provide appropriate support. Leaders and staff use a range of strategies expertly to remove barriers that may stop pupils from learning well or feeling happy. They make sensible adjustments so that pupils can take part in lessons and trips and attend school every day. For example, staff carefully consider how the classroom environment helps pupils to focus.

Leaders check pupils' progress meticulously. They review the support they provide and change it when pupils need something different. Staff are well trained. They recognise the signs that a pupil needs help and know how to respond step by step.

Leaders work closely with pupils' families and with other professionals. They listen to advice and use it to shape pupils' support and raise their aspirations. Leaders use additional funding wisely to help disadvantaged pupils to take part fully in school. They make sure that pupils with social care involvement get the right help. As a result, all pupils feel included and achieve well from their various starting points.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils benefit from a well-designed personal development programme that supports their moral, social and personal growth. They learn to reflect on their beliefs, understand right and wrong and think carefully about issues such as discrimination, respect and fairness. Pupils explain how charitable work, including foodbank collections, teaches them responsibility and kindness. They enjoy creative opportunities, such as trips to the theatre and author visits, which deepen their understanding of the wider world. Pupils speak confidently about global citizenship. They value experiences that help them learn beyond their immediate community.

Leaders ensure pupils learn how to look after their wellbeing. Pupils are helped to understand how to manage their own money and understand risk, including peer pressure, drugs and online harm. They can describe healthy relationships, consent and ways to manage upset. Pupils know how to seek help from trusted adults. They speak positively about the counselling, mentoring and pastoral support they receive. These systems help pupils to regulate their emotions and be ready for learning. New arrivals feel welcomed and fully included.

The school develops pupils' character with clear purpose. Pupils can explain resilience and link it to the school's values. They take part in a range of clubs that develop their talents and skills, such as football, choir and debating. Activities such as 'global scholars' and stage performances build pupils' confidence, teamwork and spoken language. Pupils understand fundamental British values very well. For example, they show respect for different faiths and can explain the rule of law using everyday examples. Careers learning helps pupils to think about future goals.

Leaders ensure all pupils benefit fully from the range of wider opportunities, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils

become thoughtful, confident and socially aware young people who are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well as they move through the curriculum. Over the last 3 years, pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been close to, or above, national figures in all areas. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well compared to similar pupils nationally. Current pupils continue to progress suitably because they build their knowledge securely over time.

Across the school, pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics is secure. Pupils develop fluency, accuracy and confidence, which helps them learn effectively in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress well from their various starting points.

Leaders recognise that although disadvantaged pupils achieve well, their outcomes do not match those of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Achievement in spelling and handwriting remains a barrier for a small number of pupils. Nevertheless, by the time they leave the school, pupils typically acquire the knowledge required for their next steps in education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders place pupils at the centre of their work and make decisions that reflect this. They think carefully about how their choices affect disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care. This ensures that support for these pupils is considered at every stage of planning. Leaders set clear expectations for teaching and behaviour. They keep a close eye on how well these are understood in practice. As they continue to refine their work, leaders now need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their non-disadvantaged peers.

Governors play an active role. They fulfil their statutory duties, overseeing safeguarding, for example. They check that spending decisions are sensible and fair. Governors receive regular information about the school's work and use it to support and challenge leaders. This helps them to check that pupils benefit from the actions taken.

Leaders take professional development seriously and base it on relevant research. They provide staff with a regular programme of training that builds knowledge over time and links directly to evidence about effective teaching. Leaders check how well this training is working in a variety of ways. They use what they learn to adjust the programme so that practice across the school continues to improve.

Staff wellbeing is considered in leaders' decisions. They remove unnecessary tasks and give staff time to complete key work. This helps staff to manage their workload. Leaders maintain regular communication with parents and carers, sharing information about pupils'

learning and behaviour in a way that builds trust. This partnership helps pupils feel supported at home and at school.

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

Pupils develop a sense of belonging in this caring school where every child is known well. Each morning, pupils arrive on time and settle quickly into established routines. They begin work without delay. This helps them to concentrate and learn well.

Pupils' determination is led by the school's motto of 'Non excidet', which means 'shall not fail'. Pupils understand that when they give their best each day, they will succeed. Staff have a high ambition for all pupils. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and show pride in their work. Staff act quickly to remove any barriers to learning and wellbeing, including for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils move through the curriculum with confidence and achieve well. They remember important knowledge over time. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils take part in wider school life. Many learn to play a musical instrument, take part in performances or attend international trips that deepen their cultural understanding. Relationships across the school are respectful and rooted in kindness. The school's values, such as compassion and integrity, shape pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. Pupils behave responsibly and show care for others. They say that they feel safe and trust staff to respond quickly, for example, if bullying occurs. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They understand their place in the world and act responsibly as global citizens.

Pupils know how to stay safe and look after their mental health. They take pride in their learning, the values that they have learned and the community that they are part of. By the time they leave for secondary school, pupils are responsible, confident and ready for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well when compared to their non-disadvantaged peers by helping staff to identify gaps in knowledge more precisely so these can be closed quickly.
- Leaders should ensure that they maintain high standards across the school and continue to drive further improvement so that all pupils, including those who need additional help, receive the support they need to achieve well.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Tony Sandle.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, curriculum and assessment lead, representatives of both the archdiocese and local authority, and the school's excellence and improvement partner during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. The school is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool. The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in October 2019.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Andy Reidel

Lead inspector:

Frith Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz Kelly, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Littler, Ofsted Inspector

Phil Dickson, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

461

Well above 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

480

Well above 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)

40.78%

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

3.04%

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

23.43%

Well above 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	64%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	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	73%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	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)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	54%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	52%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	66%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	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	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	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	65%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	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	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	67%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	66%	81%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	80%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	78%	-12 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	64%	78%	-14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	78%	-10 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	64%	77%	-13 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	65%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	72%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	67%	79%	-12 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	79%	-24 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)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.9%	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)	15.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.4%	16.2%	Below

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.

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