

Our Lady Catholic Primary School

Address: Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 3TF

Unique reference number (URN): 117464

Inspection report: 10 March 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 ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders seek every opportunity to develop pupils personally and to prepare them for later life. Experiences that broaden pupils' horizons, develop their character and promote their welfare are carefully woven through the curriculum. These are supplemented by workshops, assemblies, educational visits and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The impact of the programme on pupils is remarkable. Throughout the school, pupils are confident, responsible and respectful. The youngest children are encouraged to develop independence from the moment they start in the early years. Through the curriculum, pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge of many important topics, including online safety, healthy lifestyles and positive relationships. Leaders supplement the curriculum with input from external agencies, such as the local police, who run workshops for pupils on personal safety. Pupils who need additional support for their emotional wellbeing receive bespoke provision that develops their resilience.

Pupils are highly reflective. They understand that everyone is different and any kind of discrimination is unacceptable. They celebrate the many cultures, languages and religions represented in the school community and value the learning opportunities these provide. Pupils mark religious and cultural events, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Ramadan. They can comment on the similarities and differences between faiths. Pupils participate in democratic processes, such as elections for school councillors and other leadership roles. They can relate these to historical movements, such as women's suffrage.

Leaders ensure the programme for pupils' personal development and wellbeing matches the school's context. They review it annually, with input from staff and pupils, so that the opportunities offered meet pupils' changing needs, reflect their interests and prepare them as well as possible for life after school. Leaders ensure the programme is inclusive. They track pupils' participation in activities to ensure that all groups, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit equally.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Typically, pupils progress very well in all subjects. The work in pupils' books is of a high quality, sometimes very high quality. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils achieve well overall, with some achieving at a high level. In their contributions to lessons and when discussing what they have learned, pupils are generally able to recall previous learning. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately.

In national tests in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6, pupils' achievements are consistently close to or above national averages. In writing, pupils achieve close to the national average. Many pupils achieve at a higher level in all 3 subjects. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils achieve consistently close to or above the national average.

Pupils who need additional help in phonics receive effective support and progress well. Some pupils have gaps in their basic skills, such as handwriting and spelling. However, leaders have acted to address these.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance is close to the national average overall and is gradually improving. The number of pupils who are absent frequently is close to average and similarly decreasing. This is a result of leaders' increased scrutiny of attendance information and the actions they have taken. Leaders use their knowledge of pupils and their families well to identify any barriers to attendance. They take a bespoke approach that is supportive and aimed at removing those barriers. In many cases, this has been successful. However, there are some groups, for example disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance has not improved as much as leaders would like.

Pupils are friendly and polite to each other, staff and visitors. The school is happy and welcoming. Corridors and classrooms are calm, and the atmosphere is highly conducive to learning. Leaders and staff have high expectations. They convey them consistently well to pupils, making adaptations for any pupils who struggle with their behaviour. Many pupils demonstrate high expectations of themselves. They are kind and supportive to each other, with older pupils acting as excellent role models. Leaders provide well-resourced, carefully planned provision at social times. As a result, pupils play happily and safely outside. They say bullying does not happen and any kind of discrimination is not tolerated.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that teachers have the information they need to teach each subject effectively. The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced, with clear goals for pupils to achieve. There is a focus on ensuring that pupils acquire the basic skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics before moving on to more complex learning. Leaders have clear oversight of provision and act swiftly on any areas to improve. For example, they have recently changed the approach to writing to help drive up standards.

The clarity and precision in the curriculum support teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers explain new learning clearly and check pupils' understanding regularly. They introduce subject-specific language and provide pupils with opportunities to practise using it. Typically, staff help pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of number and letter formation, spelling and grammar. Sometimes, staff do not address these gaps as effectively as they could, and so the gaps persist.

Staff know the pupils well. They adapt their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs. In many cases, this work is successful. It supports pupils, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to progress well.

Early years

Expected standard 

In the early years, the curriculum is thoughtfully designed to teach children the essential knowledge and skills they need for later learning. Early reading, writing and mathematics are

prioritised. Children develop a love of stories through the books that are carefully selected to drive the curriculum. In the Nursery Year, children learn early letter, sound and number recognition. In the Reception Year, effective daily phonics and mathematics teaching develops children's reading, writing and counting skills. Leaders use their oversight of provision to ensure it is meeting children's needs. They act quickly if something needs strengthening. For example, leaders recently adopted a new approach to teaching early writing. This is having a noticeable impact.

Leaders and staff form effective partnerships with parents and carers. These help them get to know children well and understand their individual needs. Staff use their frequent interactions with children during adult-led and play-based activities to help them progress. They pose questions and provide opportunities for children to rehearse and apply their learning. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to interact with children in ways that target their individual needs and move their learning on. Overall, however, children achieve well and are ready for Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify any additional needs pupils have speedily, through careful observations and regular checks on pupils' progress. If pupils face barriers to learning, for example due to special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders put effective provision in place to reduce these. They build successful relationships with pupils and their parents and carers. Leaders then use their knowledge of pupils, their needs and interests to plan appropriate provision. Occasionally, this is not sufficiently targeted to pupils' individual needs, and greater precision is required to maximise pupils' progress.

Staff receive training, sometimes from external specialists. This teaches staff strategies to support all pupils to be successful learners. For example, pupils use practical resources in mathematics to support their understanding of numbers and calculations. Some pupils have regular sensory breaks. These help them regulate their emotions and cope with the demands of the classroom.

Leaders carefully check the quality of provision for pupils with additional needs. They track pupils' progress and their participation in wider opportunities. This includes checking the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are determined to ensure their approaches are as inclusive as possible. They constantly review and adjust these according to the results of their checks.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, staff and governors have a shared ambition to provide high-quality education that prepares all pupils as well as possible for their future lives. Governors are knowledgeable. They understand their role and fulfil their statutory duties, such as overseeing the school's safeguarding systems. They use a range of expertise and experience to support and challenge leaders as they work towards common goals.

Leaders know their school and pupils extremely well. They oversee all areas of the school with vigilance, checking that everything is working well and having a positive impact on pupils' experiences. Leaders take effective action if they identify something that needs to

improve. Examples include a strengthening of leaders' systems to support regular attendance and improvements in the teaching of writing in the early years.

Engagement with external partners, for example the local authority and the diocese, is effective in supporting school improvement. Leaders are outward facing. They seek advice, guidance and development opportunities for themselves and staff. Staff receive high-quality training, in line with the school's improvement priorities, to ensure they have the expertise they need to be effective. As a result, staff are motivated and highly skilled. They appreciate the consideration leaders, including governors, give to their wellbeing when making decisions. Their views are heard in relation to decisions about the curriculum and other aspects of the school that impact on staff workload.

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

Pupils are very proud of their school. They know it is a safe place where staff care about them, listen to their views and support their wellbeing. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are warm and nurturing. Poor behaviour, including unkindness or bullying, rarely happens. An over-riding culture of respect and kindness permeates the school. In many cases, pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. This includes regulating behaviour in corridors, during assembly and at the end of breaktime. Older pupils set an excellent example for younger pupils.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to school and are keen to experience all that the school offers. They enjoy learning and appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities made available. These include clubs before and after school, trips to nearby places of interest and inspirational visiting speakers. Consequently, overall, pupils attend well. They arrive punctually each day and settle quickly to learning tasks in their classrooms. In the early years, for example, children are keen to practise their writing as soon as they arrive.

Typically, in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged. Staff provide effective support that helps to reduce pupils' barriers to learning or to accessing other aspects of school life. Everyone is included at Our Lady.

The rich diversity of the school community is highly valued and celebrated. Pupils learn from the cultural, linguistic and religious differences between them. Leadership roles, such as being buddies for the Reception children, school councillors, head girl and head boy, develop pupils' character. Pupils become resilient, independent and responsible young people by the time they leave the school. They are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or pupils who are disadvantaged is sufficiently targeted and precise

enough to meet their individual needs.

- Leaders should ensure they continue to refine their approaches to improving attendance, particularly among groups such as disadvantaged pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently address pupils' errors effectively, for example in their basic letter and number formation, spelling, punctuation and grammar, to further improve pupils' achievement overall.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Kelly Donkor.

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, 2 assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and the chair of governors during the inspection. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair. She spoke with the school effectiveness adviser and a representative from the Diocese of Westminster on the telephone.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act took place in September 2021.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Richard Curry

Lead inspector:

Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Hannah Stoten, His Majesty's Inspector

Michele Geddes, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

208

Close to 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

243

Close to 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)

19.50%

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

1.92%

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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.73%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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

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	69%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	70%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	60%	Above

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	88%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	96%	73%	Above

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

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	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	77%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

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		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	43%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23		59%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	43%	69%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	78%	-21 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23		79%	

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	5.2%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.6%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	5.9%	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
2024/25 (2 term)	13.6%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.3%	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.

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