

Saint John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy, Wigston, Leicestershire

Address: Shenley Road, LE18 3QL

Unique reference number (URN): 138090

Inspection report: 18 November 2025

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 those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. They build detailed knowledge and use it to learn new things with confidence. This is shown, for example, in end of key stage 2 reading and mathematics tests where pupils' attainment at the expected and higher standard is above average. Leaders continue to develop pupils' writing. The school's actions are having a positive impact. Pupils' written work reflects their progress in learning over time. They use what they know to produce high-quality work. Many pupils write with detail and accuracy, showing they understand the subject well and can explain their thinking clearly.

Typically, pupils get what they need to succeed and thrive. Pupils learn the right knowledge and skills to move on to their next stage of learning with confidence. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress very well, learning alongside their peers. Staff provide extra support to help them succeed.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders take a strategic and compassionate approach to improving pupils' attendance and behaviour. They track patterns in absence closely, identify barriers and act quickly to support pupils and families. Attendance is always prioritised by leaders, who make informed decisions using all the information available to them. Staff work with families and external agencies to remove barriers, offering tailored advice, including developing school routines and providing emotional support. Leaders are visible at key times of the day, which helps build trusting relationships with pupils, parents and carers. As a result, most pupils attend well.

Behaviour across the school is calm, respectful and positive. Leaders have created a highly positive culture of care, supported by clear systems and high expectations. Staff teach appropriate behaviour as part of the curriculum and model it consistently. Pupils understand and follow the rules. Staff apply behaviour policies fairly and respond swiftly to concerns. Bullying is rare and any cases are dealt with quickly. Staff put in place personalised strategies and inclusive practices for pupils who need extra help. Pupils feel safe, take pride in their work and show very positive attitudes to learning. This helps to build a deep sense of belonging and community across the school.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders demonstrate a highly effective and strategic approach to school improvement. They understand the school's strengths and use detailed analysis to identify and act on priorities. This results in rapid and sustained improvement in key areas such as behaviour, personal development and the curriculum. Leaders empower staff to take ownership of change. Staff understand the rationale behind decisions, which are clearly linked to the school development plan and research. This has created a culture of professionalism, ambition and trust.

Professional development for staff is a strength. Leaders provide a coherent, evidence-informed programme tailored to whole-school priorities and individual needs. Coaching, mentoring and access to national qualifications enable staff to grow in their roles and develop expertise in areas of interest. Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing, ensuring that changes are purposeful and manageable.

Governors and trustees understand the school's context and provide appropriate challenge and support. They monitor staff wellbeing and hold leaders to account for provision and outcomes. Decisions are made in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or face barriers to learning. The impact is evident in the school's inclusive ethos and pupils' outcomes.

Personal development and well-being

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development programme is extensive, coherent and tailored to pupils' needs, backgrounds and aspirations. Leaders maintain strategic oversight to ensure that all pupils, regardless of any barriers, access a rich and inclusive offer. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. Older pupils learn about puberty and the importance of personal hygiene. Pupils reflect on their beliefs and experiences. They show respect for the views of others. Through the wider curriculum, they deepen their understanding of different communities, cultures and perspectives. Pupils learn about right and wrong, and they behave with integrity and engage thoughtfully with ethical issues. They understand how to stay safe, including online. They recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing. Pupils value the wide range of sporting opportunities available, with some receiving awards for their achievements.

Leaders promote pupils' social development through a broad range of enrichment activities. Pupils take part in drama, music, outdoor learning and careers events. They are highly articulate, reflective and respectful. They contribute to the school and the wider community through charitable work and leadership roles. Fundamental British values are woven through the curriculum and are aligned with the school's virtues. Where gaps in understanding are identified, leaders refine provision to strengthen pupils' knowledge.

Pastoral care is a strength. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, receive meaningful and timely support. Disadvantaged pupils enjoy equitable access to clubs and enrichment activities. Where barriers exist, leaders provide alternative opportunities that reflect pupils' interests. For example, those who require emotional support are provided with activities that promote self-regulation. This inclusive approach helps all pupils develop confidence, resilience and a clear sense of social responsibility. As a result, pupils are very well equipped for life beyond school.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has developed a curriculum that is ambitious, broad and responsive to pupils' needs. Leaders carefully consider the barriers that some pupils may face, particularly those who are disadvantaged, and make purposeful adaptations to support these pupils. Leaders place emphasis on language development. Teachers introduce key vocabulary and sentence structures clearly, helping pupils to use them confidently in their work.

Teachers check pupils' understanding often. They identify misconceptions quickly and provide clear explanations to help pupils correct them. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive timely support to keep up. Leaders understand which pupils need additional support in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, learning slows when the curriculum is not delivered as well as leaders intend. This includes the teaching of early writing. Leaders continue to work with staff to ensure that they are well equipped to teach all subjects effectively.

Reading is prioritised. Pupils who need more time to secure their phonics receive targeted support. Staff deliver the phonics programme with consistency and confidence. Across subjects, pupils are supported to access more complex texts and ideas. Pupils are encouraged to develop their understanding of the world through exploring and reading a range of texts and genres in the school's new library.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders, supported by the trust, have set a clear and ambitious vision for the early years. They have taken decisive action to improve the environment and provision, giving children a positive start to school life. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced across the 7 areas of learning. Staff assess children's starting points and use this knowledge to shape tasks, including targeted support for language development. Interactions are purposeful and enable children to build personal, social and emotional knowledge, extend their vocabulary and grow in confidence. Leaders have prioritised early writing, ensuring that there are plentiful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. They recognise that outcomes in writing are not yet comparable with other areas of learning. Staff teach phonics from the very start, helping children gain the knowledge they need to read and write. Disadvantaged children receive effective support and engage positively with peers.

Children are happy, settled and cooperative. They form positive relationships with adults, access resources independently and sustain concentration for extended periods. They develop secure knowledge across all areas and gain the skills needed for the next stage of education. Parents and carers value the secure start their children receive, recognising the school's commitment to ensuring that there is high-quality provision in the early years.

The school has established a robust culture of inclusion. This is built on high expectations and a clear commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. Across the school, inclusive practices are well established and consistently focused on improving outcomes. Staff provide carefully tailored teaching and support to pupils to help them to succeed. Staff identify pupils' individual needs early through effective checks, ensuring that support is timely and responsive to the barriers that pupils may face. Pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those known to social care, receive targeted interventions that are carefully planned and regularly reviewed. Staff ensure that pupils receive the right level of support at the right time. When needed, leaders seek expert external advice to strengthen provision. Occasionally, the curriculum for some pupils with SEND is not tailored closely enough to what they need to learn. This means that it can take some pupils who need to catch up a little longer.

The school works closely with families and professionals to shape support and raise aspirations. It uses extra funding so that pupils who need it can access well-targeted support and enrichment opportunities. Pupils who are known to social care benefit from effective use of additional funding, enabling them to fully participate in all aspects of school life.

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

At this school, every child is known, valued and supported to thrive. From the moment they arrive, pupils are welcomed into a calm, nurturing environment where they feel safe and ready to learn. Staff build highly positive, trusting relationships with pupils and families, creating a culture where children are confident to share their worries and know they will be listened to. Clear routines and high expectations help pupils feel secure; behaviour across the school is consistently respectful and positive.

Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. Lessons are engaging and well matched to pupils' needs. Staff typically adapt lessons to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can succeed. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum, particularly in phonics, reading and mathematics. Writing is improving, and pupils are developing the skills they need to express themselves clearly and confidently. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages in education.

In early years, children get off to a positive start. They are happy, settled and curious learners. The curriculum is language-rich and thoughtfully sequenced, with a particular focus on early reading and writing. Staff interactions are warm and purposeful, helping children build vocabulary and independence. Beyond the classroom, pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including drama, music, outdoor learning and leadership roles. They are articulate, reflective and proud to contribute to their school and wider community. Attendance continues to improve, especially for vulnerable pupils, as a result of very effective pastoral care and tailored support. Leaders are committed to inclusion, ambition and care. Pupils develop the confidence, character and knowledge to succeed.

Next steps

- Leaders should further refine the curriculum that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive to ensure that barriers to learning are swiftly and systematically addressed.
 - The school should ensure that the curriculum, including early writing, is delivered consistently well across all key stages so that pupils further secure the knowledge needed for future learning.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Neil Lockyer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the leader with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities during the inspection. They spoke with the chair of the proprietorial board and the representatives from the trust. Inspectors also met with a range of staff. Inspectors carried out learning walks across the school in a range of subjects. They reviewed pupils' work. They met with groups of pupils and observed social times. The inspectors examined a range of school documents, including those related to the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and governance.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is a voluntary-aided primary school within the Diocese of Nottingham. The school's previous section 48 took place in November 2023.

Headteacher : Mr Anthony Gallagher

Lead inspector:

Shaheen Hussain, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Westmoreland, 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 18 November 2025

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

211

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)

6.25%

Well below 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

0.96%

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

11.06%

Below 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).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	61%	Above
2024/25	80%	62%	Above
2023/24	72%	61%	Above
2022/23	71%	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	83%	75%	Above
2023/24	91%	74%	Above
2022/23	90%	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	80%	72%	Above
2024/25	80%	72%	Above
2023/24	78%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	81%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	90%	73%	Above
2024/25	90%	74%	Above
2023/24	88%	73%	Above
2022/23	94%	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	S	46%	S
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23	S	44%	S

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	S	62%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	S	62%	S
2022/23	S	60%	S

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	S	59%	S
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	S	58%	S
2022/23	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	S	60%	S
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24	S	59%	S
2022/23	S	59%	S

‘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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	S	68%	S
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24	S	67%	S
2022/23	S	66%	S

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	S	80%	S
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	80%	S
2022/23	S	78%	S

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	S	78%	S
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	S	78%	S
2022/23	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	S	80%	S
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	79%	S
2022/23	S	79%	S

‘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 (1 term)	4.0%	5.1%	Below
2023/24	4.0%	5.5%	Below
2022/23	4.2%	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 (1 term)	11.9%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	4.8%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	6.0%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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