

The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco

Address: Netherton Way, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 2NA

Unique reference number (URN): 149486

Inspection report: 3 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.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have strengthened their processes for identifying pupils' needs. Leaders have also considered the wider barriers to wellbeing experienced by some disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are increasingly providing staff with appropriate training to implement effective strategies to reduce some of these barriers to learning. That said, some of the strategies are not embedded consistently across the curriculum. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and external agencies to secure the right support for pupils. Leaders review the support pupils receive and make appropriate adjustments. For example, they adapted the extra-curricular offer to better engage girls with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who were not previously participating well.

Leaders use pupil premium funding well to help pupils to overcome barriers to their wellbeing. For instance, leaders ensure that pupils access enriching opportunities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award. This helps to develop their self-esteem.

Leaders use of alternative provision has reduced because the school is now better equipped to meet pupils' needs. Leaders maintain close oversight of the education of those pupils who currently attend alternative provision.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders, supported by the trust, have orchestrated a steady journey of improvement for the school. Staffing is now stable. Key stage 4 pupils appreciate the changes leaders have made, particularly in relation to behaviour. Staff are effusive in their praise of leaders and the shift in the school's culture. Leaders have secured positive changes in inclusion and in improving pupils' conduct.

Leaders show a proactive approach to improving the school. They are determined to raise pupils' aspirations, including those of disadvantaged pupils. They have put important improvements in place but it is too soon to see this translate into published results. Leaders have appropriately prioritised key actions for improvement, and there are early signs that these actions are beginning to make a difference. Leaders have a clear understanding of the remaining weaknesses in the school and recognise where there has not been enough time to see the full impact of their work. They are also strengthening the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils have a more consistent experience across subjects.

Since the school opened, governance has been overhauled. Directors of the trust and the local governing body now share a unified vision for the school, which is clearly understood and enacted by staff. Trustees and governors provide persistent and effective challenge to leaders, particularly in relation to pupils' outcomes and attendance.

Staff feel valued and well supported by leaders. They benefit from a carefully designed professional development programme. Even during periods of change, leaders have remained mindful of staff workload.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement in national examinations remains low, including for disadvantaged pupils. This reflects a legacy of weakness in the curriculum and in teaching, which has led to some pupils having gaps in their knowledge.

Currently, pupils are learning more securely than in the past, including disadvantaged pupils. Typically, pupils can articulate their current learning. Some pupils struggle to remember their learning over time and, therefore, do not develop a deep understanding across the curriculum.

Pupils at the early stages of reading receive effective support that helps them to become confident, fluent readers. Even so, many pupils still have gaps in their prior learning, particularly in spelling and mathematics, which limits how well they achieve.

Leaders have taken steps to ensure pupils are better prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. The proportion of pupils sustaining education placements is rising and increasing numbers are progressing to ambitious courses.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders are contending with entrenched poor attendance, with varying levels of success. Robust systems for monitoring and responding to pupils' absence have led to improvements in the attendance of pupils in Years 7 and 8. Persistent absence of pupils in Year 7 has notably reduced since they joined the school. Similarly, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has risen.

All staff are encouraged to contribute to raising attendance. Younger pupils, in particular, understand the importance of attending regularly and respond positively to the rewards in place. This is not mirrored among older pupils, too many of whom do not attend school regularly enough. This is contributing to the gaps that they have in their learning.

High expectations, warm relationships and a strong sense of moral purpose underpin leaders' work on behaviour. They have overhauled the culture of the school. Pupils embody the school's value of respect, which is evident in their kind interactions with one another and their courteous conduct towards adults. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are becoming more aspirational about what they can do and achieve, which is reflected in how well they apply themselves in lessons. They learn free from distraction. Leaders' success in improving pupils' behaviour is reflected in the reduced number of suspensions for unacceptable conduct.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

There is variability in how well the curriculum is delivered. In the main, teachers use a range of strategies to check pupils' understanding. However, some teachers are not confident to make changes to the curriculum or teaching in response to these checks. As a result,

teachers sometimes do not adjust learning effectively, and pupils do not consistently secure the knowledge that they need. In some subjects, teachers do not design activities that enable pupils to apply and to practise their knowledge. This means some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to consolidate their understanding.

Inconsistencies in teaching are compounded by historic weaknesses in the curriculum, which mean that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge from longer ago. Leaders have begun to successfully address gaps in pupils' literacy. However, work to identify and tackle gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge is newer. At times, teachers do not support pupils well enough to close these gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers typically adapt learning to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although some inconsistency remains. Generally, teachers use information about disadvantaged pupils to help reduce their barriers to learning effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that some elements of the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum are taught well enough for pupils to remember what they have learned. Pupils have some understanding of fundamental British values, but their knowledge of local politics and the judiciary remains underdeveloped. This is because leaders have not clearly identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, teachers find it difficult to emphasise this important information when designing learning activities and when checking what pupils know and remember.

Pupils are beginning to benefit from a more comprehensive careers programme. Leaders are raising pupils' aspirations regarding future career choices. Pupils are well informed about post-16 options, and the school has established partnerships with local providers. Leaders have supported disadvantaged pupils to take part in trips designed to inspire them to remain in education for longer. For example, all pupils have the opportunity to visit a local university. Pupils spoke eagerly about the careers fair and the range of employers they met. Increasingly, pupils are well equipped to make informed and ambitious decisions about their next steps.

Leaders are responsive to the school's context. They ensure that pupils learn about issues arising in the community, such as e-bike safety. Pupils understand the potential dangers associated with being online and can confidently explain the signs of unhealthy relationships.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular opportunities, including reward trips and The Duke of Edinburgh's award. Some pupils take part in sports clubs and activities in the arts and drama. However, despite leaders' attempts to provide enriching opportunities that match pupils' needs and interests, pupils do not engage with the programme as well as they could. This means that many do not get the full benefit

Pupils benefit from consistently high-quality pastoral support. For many pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, this support is crucial in helping them to engage well with school. Staff expertise, their secure knowledge of pupils and their unwavering focus on raising

standards mean that pupils are developing higher aspirations and are increasingly well equipped to succeed.

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

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school. From the moment that they walk through the school gate, staff are on hand to support them. Staff are confident to identify any barriers that pupils may have to their learning or wellbeing, and they are increasingly skilled in helping to reduce these barriers. This helps pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to build trust in staff.

Pupils respond ever more positively to the clear boundaries that leaders have established around behaviour. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations and they behave well. They exemplify the school's values of respect, understanding, affection and humour. Pupils are confident that any form of bullying or discrimination is not tolerated. This contributes to pupils feeling safe in school.

Where teaching is of a high quality, pupils are motivated and attentive. Typically, they learn well. However, this is not consistently the case. Past weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum and teaching mean that some pupils have gaps in their learning. As such, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. With the support of the trust, leaders are beginning to address this.

Pupils are starting to understand the importance of attending school regularly. There are some green shoots of improvement with younger pupils attending school more regularly than older pupils. Even so, pupils' typical attendance remains too low.

Pupils' ambitions are rising. They engage in some of the trips that the school offers to places of cultural value, which helps to develop their appreciation of the wider world. Pupils also engage in charitable activities, such as raising money for a local food bank. That said, pupils' understanding of what it means to be a citizen in Britain remains underdeveloped.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers respond appropriately to assessment information and adapt teaching accordingly so that learning builds securely over time.
- Leaders should support teachers to design activities that allow pupils to consolidate their learning and move to greater independence, so that they remember their learning over time.
- Leaders should ensure that gaps in pupils' writing and mathematical knowledge are addressed promptly, so that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders should continue to prioritise improving pupils' attendance, so that the successes that they have had in encouraging younger pupils to attend school regularly are replicated with older pupils.

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education identifies all the important knowledge that pupils should learn, so that teachers can support them to build this knowledge securely over time.
 - Leaders should support those responsible for subject leadership to ensure the curriculum is delivered consistently well across subjects.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Pope Francis 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 (CEO), Andrew Dawson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Isobel MacDonald-Davies.

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, senior leaders, the CEO, trust staff, staff, a representative of the archdiocese, a representative of the local authority, trustees and members of the local governing body during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in January 2025. The next inspection is due before the end January 2028.

The school makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including 3 that are unregistered.

This school opened in January 2023. Since then, it has undergone significant changes in leadership and staffing. The headteacher has been in post since April 2023. Many other leaders and staff have been appointed more recently. There is also a new local governing body.

Headteacher: Sue Bourgade

Lead inspector:

Jenny Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Yarwood, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Theobald, His Majesty's Inspector

Shane Richardson, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

532

Well 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

600

Well 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)

54.32%

Well 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: 28.9%

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

1.32%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.62%

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

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

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 (provisional)	18.7%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	10.1%	45.9%	Below
2022/23		45.3%	

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 (provisional)	32.1	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.1	45.9	Below
2022/23		46.3	

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)	-1.00	-0.03	Below
2022/23		-0.03	

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 (provisional)	11.1%	25.6%	Below
2023/24 (final)	12.2%	25.8%	Below
2022/23		25.2%	

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 (provisional)	27.6	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.5	34.6	Below
2022/23		35.0	

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)	-1.23	-0.57	Below
2022/23		-0.57	

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 (provisional)	11.1%	52.8%	-41.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	12.2%	53.1%	-40.9 pp
2022/23		52.4%	

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 (provisional)	27.6	50.3	-22.7

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	28.5	50.0	-21.5
2022/23		50.3	

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)	-1.23	0.16	-1.39
2022/23		0.17	

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)	12.1%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.8%	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)	33.0%	21.9%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	41.3%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	37.1%	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.

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