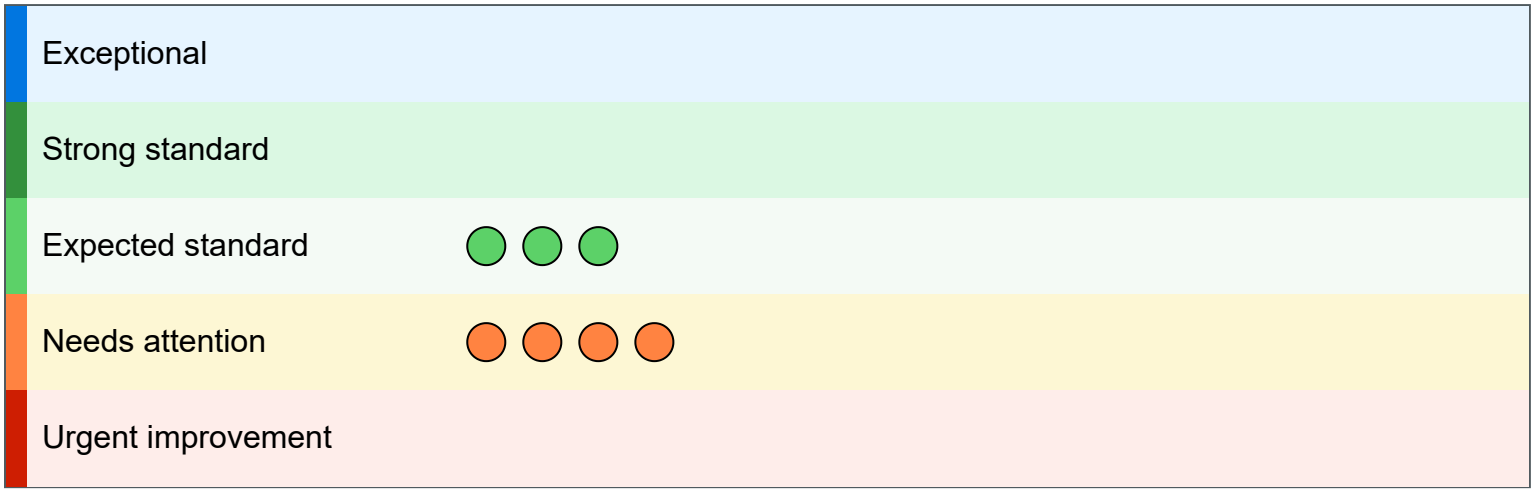
Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Address: Henshaw Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 2BE

Unique reference number (URN): 148339

Inspection report: 22 September 2026



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

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that children in the early years get off to a flying start with their education. Staff prioritise children's wellbeing. The positive relationships between staff and children help children feel secure and ready to learn. Leaders ensure that the ambitious and well-considered curriculum takes account of children's starting points. Staff use information from their initial and ongoing checks of children's knowledge to adapt the curriculum and provision where there are any gaps. For example, children enjoy the outdoor daily movement and balance sessions designed to improve their core strength.

Children develop the essential knowledge they need to prepare them well for their next steps in Year 1. Phonics teaching is precise and consistently effective. Children learn how to use their 'pinchy fingers' to hold pencils correctly so they can write the sounds. Staff make sure they count objects carefully, one at a time. As children play in the 'home corner' or when painting for example, staff engage them in purposeful conversations to extend their language and communication skills. They make appropriate adaptations to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping these children to make suitable progress. Consequently, children, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve increasingly well.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have worked hard to build an inclusive culture. They work closely with parents and carers, in addition to external professionals, to ensure that they identify pupils' needs and barriers to learning accurately when they join the school. Following a steep rise in the numbers of pupils with education, health and care plans, leaders have been building staff expertise to support these pupils effectively overall. Leaders and staff put in place suitable support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They review these plans regularly and adapt them as pupils achieve their small steps in progress.

Leaders and staff know the challenges that disadvantaged pupils may experience. Leaders consider their pupil premium strategy carefully, using additional funding to some effect to address these challenges. For example, a sharp focus on language and communication skills is particularly helpful for younger pupils, especially those whose first language is not English. While the attainment of older disadvantaged pupils is low, additional tutoring with reading is helping it move in the right direction. However, the funding has limited impact on disadvantaged pupils' attendance thus far. Pupils who are looked after receive caring support for their social and emotional barriers that enables them to thrive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders are focused on the right priorities and have a precise grasp of how effectively the curriculum is being delivered and the impact it is having on pupils' learning. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to ensure teaching addresses gaps from pupils' prior experiences.

Leaders ensure that pupils' best interests guide their decisions. They have worked with external partners to strategically focus their efforts, securing tangible improvements. For example, pupils who face barriers to success are now generally well supported. Improvements to pupils' behaviour have created a calm environment for learning. Similarly, leaders' actions to improve teaching are having a positive impact across the school.

While driving improvements, leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing. Recognising the extent of the work required, they carefully manage change to ensure that they do not overwhelm staff. Staff feel leaders support them well and they engage positively with the professional learning programme. Leaders thoughtfully design and closely align this to the school's improvement priorities. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of the rationale behind developments.

Together, those responsible for governance fulfil their roles effectively. They meet their statutory duties, holding leaders to account rigorously for the school's performance. Trustees and local governors receive and scrutinise a broad range of information, using it effectively to provide robust challenge and well-informed support.

Parents and carers value highly the school's work and their positive relationships with leaders. They appreciate recent improvements in communication and how leaders are a consistently visible presence and listen to their views.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Although leaders are beginning to realise some improvement from their actions, pupils do not achieve well enough. Pupils' attainment in national tests at the end of key stage 2 is well below national averages, meaning they are not well prepared for secondary school. This includes disadvantaged pupils, albeit these pupils are beginning to make better progress from their starting points. Since leaders strengthened the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, these pupils are beginning to make suitable progress from their starting points too.

Following improvements in the curriculum and teaching, younger pupils have greater security of important knowledge in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. Mostly, they are building well on a secure foundation from the early years. However, many older pupils still have gaps in this knowledge which are not closing quickly enough. Pupils' knowledge is building across the curriculum. Typically, they can talk about their topics, recalling some facts.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Pupils' absence from school has been consistently above national averages for several years. The numbers of pupils who are persistently absent is high. Leaders have stepped up their work to improve pupils' attendance. They monitor it very closely and are taking more robust and rigorous action when pupils' absence is a concern. Alongside their challenging

conversations with parents and carers, leaders provide bespoke support to help address any barriers. Leaders also engage pupils as ‘attendance ambassadors’ to help promote the importance of regular attendance. Leaders are improving attendance, but with small gains so far and less impact for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have successfully improved pupils’ behaviour. They ensure that staff implement their policy and expectations with consistency now. They worked with staff and pupils to increase pupils’ engagement in learning. The routines and strategies to ensure pupils are ready to listen and learn are well embedded. Consequently, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Previously, staff did not address poor behaviour or support pupils with barriers to meeting high expectations effectively. This led to a disproportionate use of suspension. However, pupils are well-supported on these occasions now. Reported instances of bullying and derogatory language are generally uncommon. Staff take these seriously and resolve them effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

While leaders are working to address this, teaching does not ensure consistently that pupils secure essential knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching of this knowledge is typically effective for younger pupils now. Although teaching is improving for older pupils too, it is not addressing sufficiently the existing gaps from pupils’ prior experience of a weak curriculum and teaching.

Leaders worked extensively to develop a coherent curriculum. They ensured that it not only makes clear the knowledge pupils will learn and when, but also that it engages pupils. Leaders ensure that teachers keep developing their expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. Typically, teachers follow a common format as required. They use helpful resources to explain new learning and provide largely suitable learning activities. Occasionally, explanations of learning or tasks lack clarity and partner activities do not always help both pupils. While teachers check pupils’ learning regularly, their checks sometimes lack rigour. Particularly for older pupils, teachers do not adapt their teaching or the curriculum far enough when pupils have misconceptions or existing gaps in their knowledge. Overall, teachers adapt the curriculum suitably for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make effective use of other adults in the classroom.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Although the school has a well-considered personal development programme, its implementation does not ensure that all pupils are fully prepared for life beyond school. There are inconsistencies in the teaching of relationships and personal, social and health education. Teaching and activities do not consistently make explicit what pupils are learning and why. Consequently, pupils' knowledge is not as secure or deep as leaders intend. While pupils can explain different ways to stay safe, particularly when online, their understanding of physical and mental health and of healthy relationships, is less secure. Similarly, pupils do not have a secure, age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values, equality and discrimination. As a result, some older pupils do not develop a secure understanding of why unkind language related to protected characteristics is unacceptable.

The school places considerable importance on pupils' personal development which is rooted in the Gospel values and Catholic social teaching. Leaders thoughtfully consider local issues and draw effectively on community partners to enrich pupils' learning. For example, the local police visited recently to talk to older pupils about anti-social behaviour and petty crime. Pupils develop their understanding of right and wrong and ways to behave responsibly. Roles of responsibility such as 'attendance ambassadors', 'mini-Vinnies' charity leaders and 'eco warriors', enable pupils to contribute positively to the school community.

Pastoral support for pupils experiencing anxiety or emotional difficulties is effective. Trained staff recognise when pupils may need additional support and know how to respond appropriately. Pupils know they can seek help from staff wearing 'Bertie the butterfly' when needed.

Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities. Most take part in clubs, sports activities and competitions, educational visits and performances. Leaders ensure that these experiences are accessible to all pupils, including those who are vulnerable or require additional support, enabling them to play a full part in school life.

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

Pupils are happy at school. They value the kindness and care shown by staff. Staff know pupils well, including any barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Where pupils need additional support, staff provide the right help to address these barriers overall. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop a firm sense of belonging in the school community.

With improvements leaders have made, children in the early years get off to a very positive start with their education. This prepares them well for their next stage and younger pupils continue to progress and achieve well now. However, older pupils' experience of the school's curriculum over time has not been effective. This has left them with some gaps in essential knowledge which teaching does not address consistently. As a result, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is low, leaving some pupils not ready enough for secondary school.

Although there have been some marginal improvements, too many pupils still do not attend school regularly enough, especially some disadvantaged pupils. This means they miss essential learning which creates or adds to the gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils behave well overall and they respond positively to the school's increased expectations to ensure they are ready for learning. Where pupils might struggle to meet these expectations, staff support them more positively and effectively now. Pupils feel safe at school because staff listen if they have a worry. Staff deal with bullying and unkindness swiftly and effectively when pupils raise a concern.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities to broaden their experiences and develop interests such as in sport, music or performance. The school's carefully considered personal development programme, underpinned by the Gospel values, helps pupils develop as well-

rounded individuals. However, pupils do not gain sufficient knowledge in some areas to prepare them fully for life beyond school.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop staff expertise to ensure that the curriculum, including that for PSHE, is taught well consistently. They should ensure teachers use assessment and their checks on learning to adapt the curriculum effectively in order to address gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge consistently.
- Leaders should strengthen their strategies to address barriers to regular attendance to ensure that all pupils, but especially disadvantaged pupils, attend school regularly.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding and respect for the protected characteristics and fundamental British Values so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

About this inspection

This school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies 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), Catherine Burnham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Donnellan.

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 leaders. They also spoke with leaders about their oversight of the school's work in a particular aspect, such as inclusion.
The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees and representatives of the local governing committee. The lead inspector also met with the CEO and a representative from the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in June 2023.
The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Elise Gribble

Lead inspector:
Claire Stylianides, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Gordon, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

303
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: 268

School capacity

420
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)

26.73%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

4.95%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.85%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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 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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	54%	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	63%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	62%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	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	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	22%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	21%	47%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	27%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18%	44%	Below

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	41%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	42%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	45%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36%	60%	Below

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	46%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27%	58%	Below

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	27%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	26%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18%	59%	Below

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	22%	68%	-46 pp
2024/25 (final)	21%	69%	-48 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	67%	-40 pp
2022/23 (final)	18%	66%	-48 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	41%	80%	-38 pp
2024/25 (final)	42%	81%	-39 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	80%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	36%	78%	-42 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	46%	78%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	78%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	78%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	77%	-50 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	27%	80%	-53 pp
2024/25 (final)	26%	81%	-54 pp
2023/24 (final)	36%	79%	-43 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	18%	79%	-61 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 (3 term)	6.7%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	5.9%	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 (3 term)	19.8%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	20.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	20.9%	16.2%	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.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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