

St Francis of Assisi Catholic College

Address: Erdington Road, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0RN

Unique reference number (URN): 104255

Inspection report: 17 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils, including those who may face barriers to their learning, achieve very well. Increasingly, this is reflected in the outcomes pupils achieve in national examinations. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is particularly impressive. Over time, the attainment of these pupils has been above national averages and is rapidly moving closer to that of their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. This picture of high achievement is mirrored across all subjects, including for pupils in key stage 3. Here, pupils develop a detailed and secure understanding of the concepts they study. The quality of the work produced by pupils across the curriculum, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is consistently high.

Pupils who join the school with gaps in their learning are very well supported. They make secure progress and quickly catch up to their peers. Overall, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education or employment.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

There is an impressive culture of high attendance. Leaders analyse patterns and trends in attendance carefully and identify concerns at an early stage. This enables them to respond to pupils' circumstances and provide tailored support to overcome any barriers. As a result, pupils attend regularly, and persistent absence has decreased sharply in recent years.

Leaders have also established a culture of positive behaviour. Staff and pupils share a common understanding of expectations, rooted in mutual respect. Staff consistently model the positive interactions they expect, which pupils value. They strive to meet leaders' high expectations in all that they do. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary, and pupils show a profound commitment to their learning.

The support for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions is worthy of note. Leaders are quick to understand the reason why pupils may be struggling and provide tailored support to help pupils overcome these challenges. Pupils who join the school with previous behavioural challenges benefit from targeted support, such as mentoring, which helps them settle quickly and manage their behaviour well. Incidents of bullying are rare and are addressed promptly and robustly, ensuring pupils are supported and issues are resolved swiftly.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is both challenging and engaging. Through careful consideration, leaders and staff have worked together to ensure the precise knowledge pupils need is ordered sensibly. Consequently, the knowledge that pupils learn builds intentionally on what they have learned before. This helps pupils to make sense of their learning and develop a keen understanding of the concepts they study. For example, in mathematics, younger pupils engage confidently with challenging concepts, such as rational numbers, before going on to explore more complex algebraic expressions.

Teachers' use of assessment is skilful. The learning cycle ensures that teachers methodically and accurately check pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. Teachers adjust their teaching skilfully to fill gaps in learning and ensure no pupil is left behind.

A highly effective and well-established programme of curriculum review, alongside individual coaching support, ensures that leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the quality of the curriculum. Leaders use the information they receive from this to provide high-quality, tailored training that equips teachers with deep subject-specific knowledge, and a profound understanding of how pupils learn best. Staff expertly adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders are deliberate in their work to build a clear and comprehensive picture of pupils' individual needs. Working hand in glove with pupils, their families and a range of external agencies, leaders identify barriers quickly, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders track pupils' progress analytically. Weekly 'team around the child' meetings review academic and personal development and identify when further support is required. The additional support provided is high quality and helps to reduce pupils' barriers. For example, pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs benefit from in-house counselling delivered by skilled staff, which improves pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders ensure that staff have the information they need to meet pupils' needs within the classroom. Staff make thoughtful and effective adaptations that enable pupils to access learning.

Leaders are highly intentional in the use of their pupil premium funding. They employ skilled support staff and have developed dedicated provision to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils benefit from family support workers and emotional literacy interventions, which improve their experiences and outcomes. Additionally, through the careful commissioning of alternative provision placements, pupils who need it are thriving.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils receive an education that enhances both their academic and personal growth. Their moral purpose shines through the decisions that they make. Leaders' powerful vision of promoting faith, culture and learning is embodied by staff, who work relentlessly to ensure this is realised. There is a profound sense of pride in belonging to the St Francis of Assisi family. This is shared among staff, pupils and parents.

Leaders and governors understand the school extremely well. They meticulously monitor the impact of their work, leaving no stone unturned in their pursuit of excellence. Because of this, leaders have an in-depth understanding of what is working and where further refinement might be required. Where needed, they provide high-quality support to address any shortcomings. Staff at all levels play an active role in this. This careful and deliberate work is having a significant and positive impact on pupils' experiences.

Staff, including early career teachers, are very well supported. Leaders have empowered them to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, all teaching staff in the school benefit from a highly trained and effective classroom coach. Staff value this support and use it thoughtfully to direct their own professional learning. This work is impressive and is driving improvements in pupils' learning across the school.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' work to develop pupils' character is of high quality. Leaders have intentionally woven opportunities to do so throughout every aspect of school life. This work is ingrained in the ethos of the school. For example, students in the sixth form frequently support younger pupils, acting as mentors to provide help with their reading and mathematics. Pupils' understanding of their social and moral responsibilities, and their willingness to engage in articulate debate that helps to shape their community, are impressive. Pupils often drive significant changes in school practice, such as the behaviour management system and days of cultural celebration. Leaders are rightly proud of this aspect of their school.

The wider personal development curriculum, including pupils' relationships and sex education, health education and the citizenship curriculum, is well planned. These elements take careful account of the risks pupils may face outside of school. For example, pupils learn about the risks associated with social media use. This work helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe outside of school, including online. While the curriculum is generally taught well, at times pupils do not have the opportunity to grapple with challenging concepts in sufficient depth. This limits the depth of pupils' understanding.

There is a growing range of extra-curricular opportunities available for pupils. Leaders have tailored these to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included. These pupils attend these sessions with enthusiasm. Despite this, the range of opportunities is not always well aligned with pupils' goals and aspirations, meaning that pupils do not always benefit from them as well as they might. Leaders are taking sensible steps to address this aspect of their work.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Across the sixth form, students increasingly achieve well. While their outcomes in national A-level assessments have typically been close to national averages, their achievements in applied general subjects have been consistently above national averages for some time. Leaders have reshaped and redefined the curriculum over time to achieve this. They have devoted a significant amount of effort to ensuring that teachers develop the detailed subject knowledge needed to support students' learning. This work is having a positive impact on students' progress, as evidenced by the quality of work they produce in lessons.

Students benefit from well-considered 16 to 19 study programmes. These include an increasing range of meaningful interactions with the world of work. This helps students to

develop their understanding of the pathways available to them after the sixth form. As a result, most students go on to gain places at university or apprenticeships, when they leave.

The personal development curriculum in the sixth form is generally taught well. It helps students to understand how to approach life as a young adult. Where needed, students who face barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported and make sound progress.

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

Pupils thrive here. A culture of love and warmth permeates every interaction. From the birdsong that narrates pupils' transitions around the building, to the structured start to the school day and weekly celebrations, every moment is used intentionally to ensure faith, culture and learning take pride of place in pupils' lives. This is a special place.

Throughout their time here, pupils quickly develop into attentive and eloquent young people, who gain a deep sense of integrity, compassion for others, and a strong sense of service to their community. For example, many pupils, including students in the sixth form, take an active role in the school's work to support local care homes and frequently raise money for a wide range of charities that support communities in need.

The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' wider personal development and prepares them well for life after school. Through this, pupils develop a sound understanding of the world of work. This allows them to make informed decisions about their next steps.

The passion that pupils show for their learning is admirable. Within lessons, they focus intently on their learning and make sound progress. Pupils who face barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are given the support they need to overcome any challenges they might face.

Pupils behave extremely well, with older pupils acting as role models to others within the school community. Bullying is rare and leaders deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively. Pupils feel valued and heard. They take comfort in sharing any concerns, no matter how small, with staff and they know that staff will act upon these swiftly.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge, and sufficient time, to deliver the wider personal development curriculum effectively, enabling pupils to develop a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the key concepts within this subject area.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Michael Wilkinson.

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, other senior leaders, members of the local governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese, 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:

The school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its last section 48 inspection was in September 2024.

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Luke Salkeld

Lead inspector:

Alexander Laney, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Philip Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector

Antony Edkins, Ofsted Inspector

Richard Winzor, Ofsted Inspector

Nazyia Ghalib, 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 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,113

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: 1,067

School capacity

1,100

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.13%

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: 28.9%

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

2.70%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.96%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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

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 (revised)	58.7%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	52.7%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	52.1%	45.3%	Close to average

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 (revised)	53.2	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.4	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	49.7	46.3	Close to average

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)	0.10	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.08	-0.03	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' 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 (revised)	47.5%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	42.9%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	25.0%	25.2%	Close to average

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 (revised)	47.6	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	43.9	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	37.3	35.0	Close to average

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)	0.12	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.90	-0.57	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' 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 (revised)	47.5%	53.1%	-5.6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	42.9%	53.1%	-10.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	25.0%	52.4%	-27.4 pp

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 (revised)	47.6	50.4	-2.8
2023/24 (final)	43.9	50.0	-6.1
2022/23 (final)	37.3	50.3	-13.0

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 non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.12	0.16	-0.04
2022/23 (final)	-0.90	0.17	-1.07

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	90%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	98%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	34.31	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.85	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.73	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average

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)	6.7%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.2%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.3%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	17.7%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	27.4%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	23.7%	26.5%	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.

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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