

Our Lady and St Kenelm RC School

Address: Bundle Hill, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 4AR

Unique reference number (URN): 103850

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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils' books sparkle with care. In lessons, and in the work pupils produce, it is clear that they learn what leaders intend. Pupils build important knowledge securely and meet clear expectations. Early reading gives pupils the key they need to unlock the wider curriculum, and positive learning habits are the norm.

Outcomes in national curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics are high. These have been consistently sustained. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups of pupils who can be vulnerable to underachievement make positive progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils typically achieve better than their disadvantaged peers nationally. Pupils' books are reflective of the high standards that they achieve. This evidences the impact of the school's work, its ambition for all and how well the curriculum meets the needs of each pupil in the school so all feel and experience success. It means that pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is a standout strength. Leaders prioritise it, analyse patterns and act early. They know the reasons behind absence and work with families with empathy and resolve. As a result, pupils attend very well. Notably, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend at least as well as, and currently better than, other pupils. Where attendance dips for individuals, leaders respond swiftly. They remove barriers, agreeing clear procedures and check impact. This means that problems do not result in more persistent absence. Leaders' approach reflects the school's philosophy of providing thoughtful challenge and having supportive conversations with parents and carers.

Behaviour and attitudes are joyous to see. Classrooms are calm and purposeful; pupils arrive promptly and settle quickly, and learning starts at once. No pupil is prevented from learning because all pupils follow the rules and expectations very well. Pupils benefit from routines, including specific resources to support with understanding, which help pupils to manage learning independently. Staff apply expectations for behaviour consistently. Pupils' reintegration after suspension is handled with kindness and clarity. Pupils follow rules well. The behaviour seen in learning is equally as positive at social times. Pupils continue to support each other and there is a tangible sense of collaboration and support. The culture is unequivocally conducive to success.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Every classroom is a hive of pupils thinking, trying and achieving. Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning and everyone wants to do their best. Staff skilfully recognise when teaching or expectations need to be amended, and do so confidently and appropriately. They circulate with intent and tackle misconceptions on the spot, so pupils meet the aims of the lesson and feel successful. Leaders make strong foundations in important learning non-negotiable. Pupils secure the skills needed in phonics to become competent readers, fluent hand writers and competent spellers. They remember important number facts. If pupils

struggle with these, extra support and teaching sessions are put in place to provide the help needed.

Developing pupils' speech and language is a golden thread. Pupils speak with impressive assurance and use precise vocabulary, starting in the pre-school. In reading lessons, teachers model how to think about texts and probe word choices to uncover character features. They can explain what authors intend to achieve by the language and sentence construction used. Leaders have adopted and adapted schemes so the curriculum is coherent, sequenced and revisits the right content at the right time. Teachers' skilful adaptations mean everyone learns the same ambitious curriculum. Pupils who face barriers, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access learning and succeed alongside their peers to the same high standard.

Early years

Strong standard 

Early years is a joyful, language-rich environment. Children are very excited learners. The school works with parents and carers so staff understand children well before they start. In pre-school, adults are expert conversationalists: they question, probe and model vocabulary so every moment counts. Children show impressive stamina, collaborate kindly and explain their thinking. Well-taught routines help them feel secure and ready to learn. High-quality vocabulary, songs, rhymes and stories run through the day so language 'sticks' in children's minds. Adults notice which children engage less well in learning and draw them in with warmth and prompts.

Staff in the Reception class build on children's positive start in pre-school beautifully. Children apply phonics in writing with growing confidence, reaching for sound mats and the tricky words available, independently. Staff check children's understanding and give focused practice where needed. Mathematics is playful and precise, developing secure number sense and the ability to reason. This is underpinned by children knowing and using the right words to describe their learning. Leaders ensure pre-school children are off to a flying start, enabling many children to begin the Reception Year with the skills, knowledge and emotional maturity to settle quickly. The vast majority reach the learning goals expected of them by the time they transition to Year 1, leaving them exceptionally well prepared for what comes next and the demands of key stage 1.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders set a clear, shared ambition for the curriculum, for teaching and for pupils' wider development. They bring staff and parents and carers with them. They map knowledge carefully, align adopted schemes intelligently and check the difference this makes through constantly monitoring the provision that is on offer for pupils. They provide professional learning for staff that is practical and evidence-informed. Staff appreciate the training, purposeful coaching and time to refine their practice.

Due to increasing complex needs, inclusion is a now an even greater priority. Leaders recognised the need for tightening early identification of needs and their oversight the provision for pupils with an education, health and care plan, so support is now timely and precise. There has been rapid improvement in this vital area of the school's work. Leaders make the right decisions to ensure barriers for all pupils are reduced. Staff have a thorough

understanding of each pupil. This makes them extremely well-placed to act on any concerns they might have, no matter how small. The needs of pupils are at the forefront of everything that the school does.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care, support and education that their children receive. Communication is now clearer and concerns are handled openly and with care. Staff feel valued and trusted. Their individual talents are recognised and utilised. Staff describe genuine opportunities to develop their careers and to continually evolve as professionals.

Governors are committed, curious and present in school. They check the information leaders provide and seek assurances for what they are told. Their challenge to leaders is robust yet constructive. For example, if a year group lags behind in terms of the standards of achievement the school strives for, governors seek assurance that adaptations are in place, and are impactful, and that outcomes are rising. Leadership creates the conditions for pupils and staff to thrive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils brim with confidence and pride in their school. They seize leadership roles, start clubs and turn compassion into charity and community work. They describe their school as 'child-led' because leaders make pupils' ideas everyday reality. The enrichment offer is wide and thoughtfully curated. Lunchtime activities meet varied interests, so more pupils find a place to belong. There is something for everyone: a quiet space, a social group or an action-packed activity.

A large pupil-led social action group, including the youngest children, shows how effectively pupils give back. They choose causes, plan events and talk with humility about the difference they make. These experiences build character, teamwork and a sense of citizenship. Leaders track participation, notice who is missing and remove barriers so disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit fully and equally.

Through the personal development programme, pupils learn essential knowledge in a clear, age-appropriate and sequenced way. They access suitable relationships and sex education and health education. They speak with maturity about different families, recognise discrimination and use respectful language. Respect is commonplace. Pupils learn how to stay safe online, manage privacy and seek help. Pastoral care dovetails with the taught curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep mentally and physically healthy, where to seek help and how to support friends. The impact of this learning and involvement shines through daily life. Pupils reflect on beliefs and experiences, enjoy the arts, celebrate cultural diversity and debate 'big questions' with curiosity and respect. They learn about different cultures and religions by teaching each other. It brings learning to life. They learn about fundamental British values, play a part in shaping school rules and evaluate fairness. By the time they leave, pupils are reflective, resilient and generous-spirited. They know their strengths, own their next steps and feel ready to play a positive part in their community and the wider world.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Staff know pupils well. Class 'profile pages' give crisp snapshots of barriers that pupils might face and helpful strategies that teachers can adopt, so classroom support and lesson design feel personal for pupils. Staff receive the guidance they need to enable all pupils to learn the same curriculum and to achieve well. Targeted opportunities for continuing staff development allow the suggestions and recommendations for effective approaches to be put into practice. Leaders seek advice from specialists for speech and language therapy, educational psychology and occupational therapy so that support reflects pupils' academic, social, emotional and language needs. Elma, the school therapy dog, complements this support beautifully. Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide extra teaching, small-group interventions, nurture and enrichment. It also removes practical barriers and ensures that the full curriculum and enrichment offer can be experienced by all. The impact is evident in the high rates of achievement for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders keep close eye on provision through 'pupil progress meetings', work sampling, lesson visits and dedicated 'surgeries' for parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In response to a changing cohort of pupils, leaders now place a greater emphasis on identifying additional needs as early as possible. Leaders are tightening school policies, systems and oversight so that, as needs grow, support stays sharply matched to pupils' individual needs.

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

Our Lady and St. Kenelm is a place where pupils want to be. They speak passionately about their school, with some saying that they never want to leave. This is reflected in very high attendance and punctuality. Pupils step into calm, purposeful classrooms and get straight to learning. A gentle buzz of talk runs through lessons as pupils explain ideas, check understanding with adults, and improve their work. Pupils achieve very well. They love reading, and it shows. Their confidence with books opens doors across the curriculum.

Pupils feel known and cared for. They know who to turn to if they have a worry, including online, and they trust staff to act. They describe bullying as uncommon and say adults sort issues out quickly and fairly. Every opportunity is available to every pupil. Leaders encourage pupils' engagement and involvement in all aspects of school life. All pupils can be involved in leadership roles. This means all pupils benefit from these responsibilities.

Pupils behave beautifully. They repeat the school's mission statement and live it out in all that they do. In lessons, they help one another and are happy to both give and receive this help.

Older pupils shine as role models. They plan and run clubs at lunchtime and look out for younger pupils. Leadership opportunities are plentiful. Pupils throw themselves into charity and community projects and speak thoughtfully about the difference they make. They are particularly proud of their efforts to have an outdoor gym installed at the school. Given the

cost, they had to present their case to the full governing body with assurance and confidence, leaving governors with no choice but to accept their request and provide the resources they sought. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education when the time comes to leave their much-loved primary school.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed, and continue to tighten, systems for rapid identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities alongside identifying the best processes and systems to ensure they get the right help at the right time and in the right way.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Peter Johnson.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our updated 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 deputy headteacher, key stage leaders and 3 governors, including the chair. They also spoke with a representative of the diocese.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in September 2024.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Christine Finnegan

Lead inspector:

Keri Baylis, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lisa Montandon, Ofsted Inspector

Azizan Kabil, 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

205

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

210

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)

10.73%

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

1.46%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.34%

Well below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	81%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	92%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	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	88%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	93%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	90%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	63%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	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	94%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	100%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	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	81%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	88%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	75%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	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 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	69%	68%	1 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	63%	67%	-5 pp
2022/23 (final)	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	94%	80%	14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	100%	80%	20 pp
2022/23 (final)	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	81%	78%	3 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	88%	78%	10 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	75%	80%	-5 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	79%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	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 (2 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.0%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	13.0%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.3%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright