John F Kennedy Catholic School

Address: Hollybush Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 2PH

Unique reference number (URN): 149743

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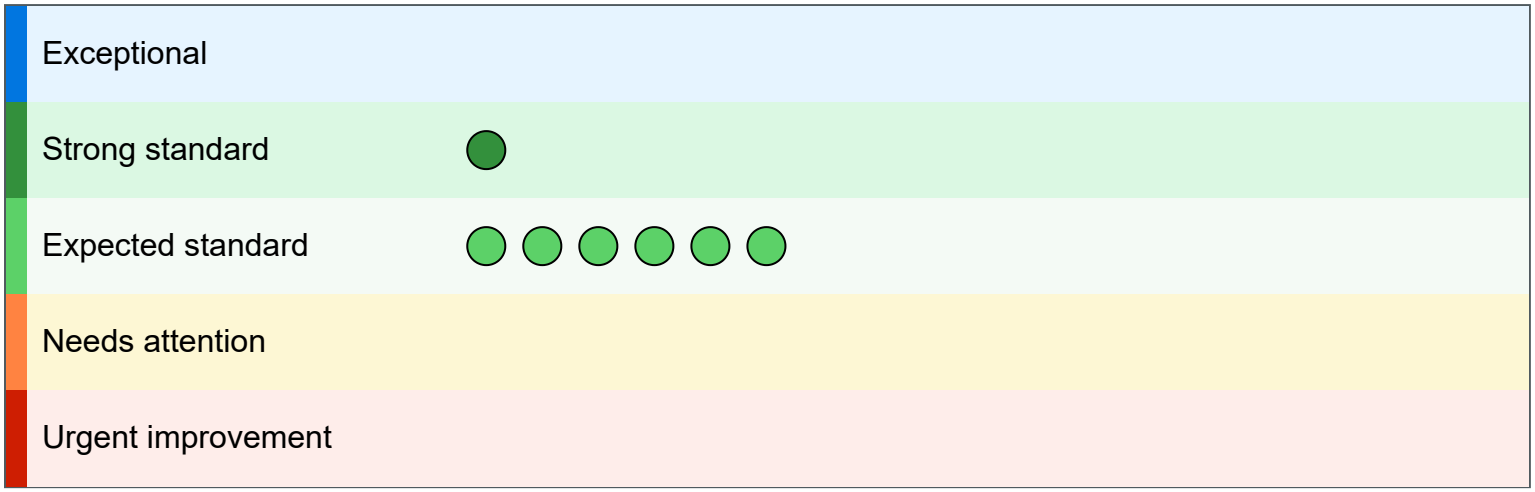

Safeguarding standards met

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

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The well-planned programme of personal development enables pupils to develop a secure and detailed understanding of key topics such as healthy relationships and living in the wider world. This helps them develop into well-rounded young people who are reflective and empathetic. Leaders ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum is responsive to the needs of pupils and their experience of life in modern Britain. Leaders reinforce learning with theatre productions and visiting speakers to bring the curriculum to life.

Leaders provide a very wide range of enrichment activities. They use a map called the 'JFK Journey' to demonstrate the opportunities available to every year group. Many pupils take part in sport and enjoy representing their school. Leaders ensure that all clubs and activities are inclusive. Pupils appreciate the diversity on offer and enjoy developing skills such as teamwork and resilience. Pupils from across year groups come together to enjoy clubs such as drama, orchestra and Gaelic football.

Leaders create opportunities for all pupils to develop their leadership skills. Pupils take on leadership roles such as house captain and member of the senior student leadership team. Leaders think carefully about how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged can take part so that their voices are heard. The sixth-form student leadership team plays a significant role in the life of the school. It works closely with senior leaders to effect change. It leads events that raise money for charities and plans events that bring the wider, local community together. This helps pupils understand the impact they can have in the world. Through leadership roles, pupils develop confidence and communication skills.

Careers education is a strength. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps. All pupils experience a range of activities that help them to understand the options available to them. This includes careers fairs, Year 8 work day and talks from local companies. Pupils in Years 10 and 12 enjoy work experience. Students in the sixth form move on to destinations that include higher education, apprenticeships and work.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Typically, pupils at this school achieve well, which is reflected in their results in national examinations. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, where outcomes are above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities demonstrate secure knowledge of their learning and make appropriate progress from their starting points. Pupils learn well at key stage 3, securing foundations that prepare them effectively for GCSE study. Pupils across the school produce high-quality work that reflects their engagement in learning.

In the sixth form, students generally attain outcomes that are in line with national averages. Leaders have worked with staff to address a dip in progress in 2025. The school has clear plans to further improve aspects of the curriculum and teaching so that pupils consistently achieve highly.

Most students achieve the necessary qualifications to ensure that they are prepared for the next stage of their education. They move on to a range of destinations that suit their interests and abilities.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most attend well, and persistent absence is below national averages. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as they could. Where this is the case, leaders work closely with pupils and their families to provide support when problems occur. Leaders closely track and monitor the impact of the actions they take.

Pupils feel safe at school. They treat other people with kindness and respect. Leaders help them to understand the importance of politeness and manners. Bullying is rare. When it does occur, staff act swiftly and effectively. Pupils are confident in their approach. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They use the mantra 'think kindness, choose respect' to help pupils reflect on their choices. Leaders find every opportunity to reinforce and reward positive behaviour. As a result, there is very little poor behaviour during social times, and lessons are rarely interrupted. Pupils understand the clear routines and follow them. This means that they are able to focus on their learning and get the most out of school life. Leaders support the small number of pupils who need help to meet and sustain the school's high expectations of behaviour. Pastoral staff work patiently with them to understand their barriers to learning. They create bespoke packages of support where necessary. Pupils respond positively to this help and improve their attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum is ambitious and well planned. Leaders review it regularly. There is a wide range of options subjects available for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form. These qualifications match their interests and abilities. The curriculum enables pupils to build on their prior knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders ensure that pupils build a strong, subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, pupils are confident in talking about their learning.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They provide teachers with effective training and support. As a result, teachers are increasingly confident in adapting their teaching to suit the needs of learners. However, this is not consistently embedded across the school. School leaders are working to ensure that teaching is consistently effective and meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge. Most are subject specialists.

Teachers explain new learning clearly. They choose appropriate activities that engage pupils. Teachers check that pupils understand and can remember what they have been taught. They identify and correct misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils who

have gaps in key learning, especially in mathematics, reading and writing, benefit from well-planned additional support. Consequently, they catch up with their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have created a culture of inclusion in the school. They ensure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders communicate this information clearly to staff. As a result, pupils are well known and supported both inside and outside of lessons. Frequent staff training helps teachers reduce barriers to learning. Leaders check how well this is implemented.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support so that they can learn alongside their peers. They are fully included in all aspects of school life. For example, leaders prepare them well for school trips, and after-school clubs are adapted to suit their needs. The Learning Support Department opens early in the morning to help pupils to settle for the day.

Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively. They identify opportunities aimed specifically at disadvantaged pupils. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils' voices are represented in the many pupil leadership roles across the school. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Where there is more to do, such as ensuring that disadvantaged pupils attend as well as their peers, leaders evaluate and improve their processes. As a result, these pupils' barriers to attendance are increasingly well addressed.

Leaders provide bespoke support to pupils who struggle in mainstream lessons. This includes appropriate use of external provision. These strategies ensure that pupils continue to access education and qualifications.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

The caring and committed leadership team is ambitious for all pupils in the school. It has created a strong, inclusive culture based around the school mission statement of 'inspire, achieve, serve'. It ensures that the best interests of pupils lie at the centre of decision-making. Leaders have a clear sense of purpose that is well understood and shared by staff.

The school has recently joined All Saints Catholic Academy Trust. School and trust leaders have a secure and detailed understanding of the school's context. They work together to celebrate its strengths and identify areas for improvement. Governors are passionate advocates for the school and provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders. This helps to bring about positive change. Governors carry out their delegated duties and responsibilities well.

Trust leaders provide a range of expertise and practical support for leaders at all levels. The school, trust and local academy council work closely together. This helps to improve the lives and opportunities for families and pupils. As a result, the school is held in high regard among parents and carers and in the local community.

Leaders ensure that the programme of professional development for all staff aligns with school improvement priorities. This includes teachers at the start of their careers, who

appreciate the support they receive. Staff are confident that leaders give due regard to their workload. Staff feel valued and known as individuals. This sense of care and compassion pervades leadership at all levels. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Post 16 provision **Expected standard**

Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the sixth form. Students are generally well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training. They achieve broadly in line with national averages, and outcomes are improving. Leaders are ambitious and work closely with teachers to improve the consistency of assessment and level of challenge in lessons. As a result, students produce work that is of a high quality and demonstrates progress through the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that students have the opportunity to develop as independent learners. At the same time, they provide consistently high levels of pastoral support and guidance. Students appreciate this and enjoy positive relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted so that students with additional needs can access it successfully.

Many students take on high profile leadership roles. They are excellent role models to younger pupils. They take on considerable responsibility, such as working with senior leaders on how to make the 'theme of the week' more relevant to younger pupils. There is a broad programme of wider enrichment opportunities, such as the Extended Project Qualification, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, youth ministry and volunteering. Students often play a lead role in activities that unite the community, such as house competitions and fundraising activities.

Students appreciate the comprehensive careers guidance they receive. Leaders make sure they provide practical support and meaningful experiences, such as university visits and work experience, that guide students to their destinations of choice.

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

Kindness is the golden thread that weaves throughout this school community. Pupils are warm and open. They report that the best thing about the school is that people care about each other. As a result, pupils treat each other well. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils are confident that staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. This is based on a shared understanding of respect. Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to get help and support if they need it.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities the school provides. This includes a wide range of clubs and activities, such as a chamber choir, chess club and art club. Many pupils take on leadership roles. They work closely with senior leaders, who involve them in decision-making. This helps pupils to feel empowered and valued.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging. They know that staff have their best interests at heart. There is a high level of pastoral care. Staff take swift action when pupils need

additional support. This is particularly the case for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are disadvantaged or are known or previously known to social care. Staff support pupils to overcome any barriers to learning.

Pupils are proud to be members of this community. Most pupils attend well, and persistent absence is low. They understand leaders' high expectations and rise to the challenge. The school is a calm and orderly place. There is very little poor behaviour. Pupils can focus on their learning because disruption is rare. Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers choose activities that engage pupils and help them build on prior learning. This means that they make positive progress from their starting points. Most pupils achieve well as a result. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to implement strategies to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers confidently and consistently implement adaptations to their teaching based on pupils' identified additional needs.
- Leaders should continue to use their thorough analysis of post-16 students' learning and performance to inform adaptations to teaching and the curriculum to improve students' outcomes.

About this inspection

This school is part of All Saints Catholic 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), Stephen Wheatley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Leigh O'Connor.

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 chair of trustees, a further trustee, the governance professional, the CEO, members of the local academy board including both co-chairs, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and pupil Ofsted online surveys.

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 Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Westminster. Its last section 48 inspection was on 31 January and 1 February 2024.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. It has converted to become an academy school. There have also been some changes to members of the senior leadership team.

The school currently makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Paul Neves

Lead inspector:
Jane Bennett, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Sufian Sadiq, Ofsted Inspector
Likhon Muhammad, Ofsted Inspector
Caren Earp, Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hemmings, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,078
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

1,243
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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

15.11%
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: 28.9%

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

2.60%
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

11.97%
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

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 (final)	54.5%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56.2%	45.9%	Above
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 (final)	47.9	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.9	45.9	Above
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)	0.15	-0.03	Close to average
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 (final)	27.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.8%	25.8%	Close to average
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 (final)	32.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.9	34.6	Close to average
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)	-0.55	-0.57	Close to average
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 (final)	27.8%	53.1%	-25.4 pp
2023/24 (final)	34.8%	53.1%	-18.4 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 (final)	32.6	50.4	-17.9
2023/24 (final)	36.9	50.0	-13.2

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	-0.55	0.16	-0.71
2022/23		0.17	

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
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above

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 (final)	32.12	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.12	34.38	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 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above

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)	7.1%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.4%	8.9%	Below

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	15.6%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	20.1%	25.6%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

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

Strong standard 🟢

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