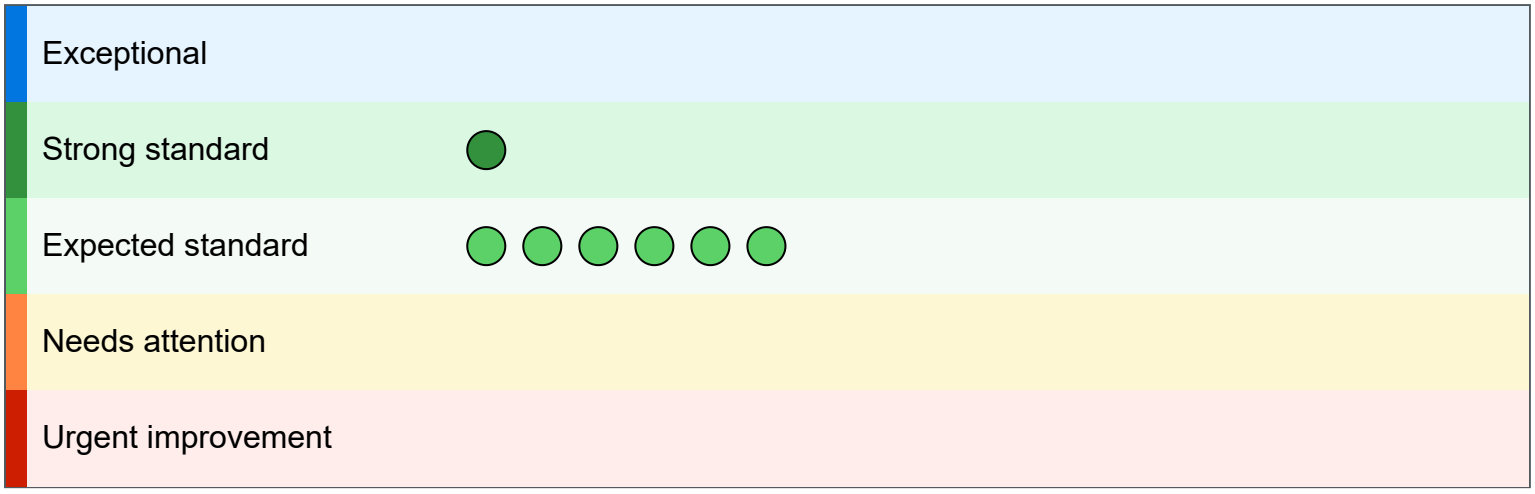
St Joseph and St Bede RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Address: Danesmoor Drive, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 6ER

Unique reference number (URN): 150176

Inspection report: 14 July 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.

Strong standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The extensive personal development programme sits at the heart of this school. Staff have carefully designed it to meet the needs of the school community. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum provides pupils with the important knowledge they need to keep themselves safe and healthy. Leaders adapt the curriculum to reflect local needs. For example, additional lessons on water safety were added when children had been swimming in rivers in the local area. Pupils talk confidently about how this has helped to keep them safe. Staff deliver the school's relationships and sex education and health education curriculum clearly. Pupils have a secure understanding of how their bodies will grow and change because of this. They understand what healthy relationships are and how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to become positive citizens. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance. These are reflected in many aspects of school life. Pupils talk about how everyone shows tolerance in their school, and they are free to express themselves. Pupils also demonstrate the importance of treating others kindly.

Leaders ensure that all pupils engage in a wide range of opportunities. These enhance pupils' learning and allow them to have new experiences. Pupils discuss how trips to museums, zoos and castles help them remember their learning. They develop their talents and interests through the wealth of clubs available to them, including in chess, 3D printing, fashion design and 'dog Pilates' with Neville, the therapy dog.

The school's quiet areas, woodland area and farm help to nurture pupils' wellbeing. Pupils describe how helping take care of the animals helps them build resilience. They learn responsibility through leadership roles in school, including a team who champions environmental stewardship and peer mediators who help pupils resolve friendship issues. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, fully engage with the personal development offer and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders provide remarkably effective wellbeing support to pupils and their families throughout the year. This helps to forge highly positive relationships between the school and families. Parents and carers are confident to ask for support whenever they need it.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Overall, pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with national averages. Staff's expectations of pupils are high, and disadvantaged pupils achieve higher than their peers nationally.

Pupils typically gain the basic skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. They build their knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. This is particularly true for younger pupils who have a deep knowledge about their learning. They have benefited from the updated curriculum. Pupils take pride in their learning, and the quality of the work they record in books increases as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

The school provides a warm, nurturing environment and a calm start to the day. Positive relationships with parents and carers also help make this a school that pupils want to attend. Leaders keep a strong focus on improving attendance. Most pupils' attendance has increased year on year, while persistent absence has reduced. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not attend as regularly as they could. Leaders change their approach to the circumstances of individual families and work thoughtfully with them to improve attendance. They check attendance information carefully to identify barriers to regular attendance and put targeted support in place to help overcome them.

Pupils' behaviour in school is highly positive. This is underpinned by clear rules and expectations that are understood by everyone. Staff apply these expectations consistently and provide effective support for pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. Classrooms are calm, orderly places of learning that are rarely interrupted by disruptive behaviour. During social times, pupils play happily together. Staff deal with bullying and discriminatory behaviour quickly and effectively. Leaders carefully check on pupils' behaviour to spot trends and patterns. For example, they increased opportunities for physical activity to help foster positive interactions among older pupils.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Pupils benefit from a broad and well-ordered curriculum. Leaders have carefully identified the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn. They have created links between subjects to give pupils rich opportunities to use new words. For example, staff use texts in the English curriculum to increase pupils' vocabulary and understanding in history and geography. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and provide suitable activities for pupils to practise new learning. Teachers adapt learning effectively, so pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to learning access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. For example, they introduced a consistent approach to handwriting when they noticed it was being taught differently across classes. This work is showing improvements in pupils' books.

Pupils typically have the basic skills in reading, writing, spoken language and mathematics that they need to be successful. Those who need extra help to catch up receive it quickly. Pupils can speak about their learning and ideas confidently. This is because leaders focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and oracy skills early. However, on occasion, teachers do

not consistently identify and address the errors and misconceptions that some pupils have, including in their writing.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that children get off to a positive start in the early years. Children settle quickly into established routines and engage confidently in learning and play. They are well cared for by adults, who know them well.

Leaders have ordered the curriculum carefully and identified the important knowledge and vocabulary that children should learn. Staff explain new concepts clearly. Thoughtfully designed activities enable children to learn the important basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics through play. Purposeful interactions between staff and children enhance this and help develop children's language skills. Children develop positive social skills. They work and play well with others and keep trying when they face challenges. Phonics is taught consistently well by staff. Children form their letters correctly and are proud to read words back to adults.

Staff check children's progress and identify gaps in their learning. Staff identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly. They adapt activities to make sure that these children can access the same learning as their peers. Children with SEND make suitable progress from their starting points.

Children achieve well. They gain the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for key stage 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders remove barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing effectively. They use well-established systems to check pupils' needs accurately. Mostly, staff, particularly in English and mathematics, adapt learning activities to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other barriers to their learning access the full curriculum. However, teachers do not consistently adapt activities effectively in the wider curriculum. When pupils need specialist input, leaders are quick to secure this. Staff work closely with parents and carers to regularly review and adapt pupils' individual education plans. Leaders check the impact of these plans carefully. Pupils with SEND or other barriers to their learning make suitable progress from their starting points.

Leaders share important information about vulnerable pupils, including those known or previously known to social care, and their circumstances with staff. This means that staff can provide extra support when needed.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully. For example, they provide professional learning opportunities to staff to help them develop pupils' spoken language and provide a breakfast club to help pupils have a prompt start to the day. These actions have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attendance.

Leadership and governance **Expected standard**

Changes in leadership have been well managed by local governors and the trust. Leaders, governors and trustees have a well-informed view of the school. They provide clear direction to school staff. Leaders know the school's strengths precisely and which areas to focus on next. Leaders at all levels monitor improvement priorities carefully. This has contributed to improvements in areas, such as phonics and the early years provision. These improvements have had a positive impact of pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Local governors and trustees play a vital role in the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and bring a wide range of expertise to their roles. Local governors carefully balance challenge and support for leaders. This helps them have a clear picture of how well leaders are working towards improvement priorities.

Staff feel valued. They describe a school culture of trust, respect and high expectations. Staff are proud to work in the school and serve the community. Leaders carefully consider how any changes may impact on staff's workload and wellbeing. They provide effective professional learning that helps staff to continually improve their practice.

Leaders work closely with families, external professionals and community partners. This strengthens support for pupils who face the greatest barriers. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive when they speak about the school. They appreciate that staff act in the best interests of pupils.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this caring and vibrant school. A Roman Catholic ethos helps pupils to feel valued as part of a family community. Pupils smile as they are warmly greeted by staff on the gate each morning. They settle quickly into familiar routines that prepare them for the day ahead. Some pupils have extra support to start their day, including 'check-ins' with staff in 'the hive' or visiting the school's farm to feed the animals. Pupils attend school regularly.

The school is calm and orderly throughout the day, including at social times. Pupils behave well and show kindness and support for each other. Well-trained staff help pupils who struggle to manage their own emotions. Pupils do not worry about being bullied. They know that staff deal with any incidents of unkindness quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their interests. For instance, they learn how to write code in coding club and follow recipes in cookery club. Pupils relish the opportunities to take on additional responsibility in school through roles such as school councillors and play leaders.

Pupils achieve well. Pupils take pride in their work and engage fully in their learning. They speak confidently and articulately about what they learn. For example, they can describe the events that led to the Titanic sinking in history and use technical vocabulary such as 'slip' and 'pinch pots' when working with clay in art. Staff provide extra help for pupils who may

find learning more difficult. This enables them to learn well alongside their peers. Pupils are well prepared for the next part of their educational journey.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff check pupils' learning accurately to identify and address any gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders should support staff to adapt learning activities consistently well to meet the needs of pupils across the curriculum.
- Leaders should continue to closely analyse the attendance of a small number of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that their attendance continues to improve.

About this inspection

This school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta 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, Chris Foley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John McAuley.

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

The inspection took place from 14 to 15 July 2026.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, leaders and staff during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the trust, local governors, the local authority and the archdiocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection was in January 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Interim Headteacher: Heather Daly

Lead inspector:
Jonny Foster-Carr, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Maria McGarry, Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Littler, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

341
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

343
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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.20%
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: 26.3%

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

2.64%
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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.37%
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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24		61%	
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (final)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24		74%	
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (final)	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24		72%	
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24		73%	
2022/23		73%	

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		46%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
2022/23		44%	

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		62%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24		62%	
2022/23		60%	

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		59%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	59%	Above
2023/24		58%	
2022/23		58%	

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		60%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2023/24		59%	
2022/23		59%	

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		68%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	69%	6 pp
2023/24		67%	
2022/23		66%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24		80%	
2022/23		78%	

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		78%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2023/24		78%	
2022/23		77%	

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		80%	
2024/25 (final)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	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 (3 term)	9.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	14.0%	14.6%	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.

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