

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

Address: 1 - 39 Drummond Crescent, London, NW1 1LY

Unique reference number (URN): 100055

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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils know the importance of coming to school every day. Attendance in the school is high. The school works closely with pupils and their families to support improved habits of attendance. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Part-time timetables are used with care and are appropriate for the pupils involved. These are monitored well, although, the intended end dates could be more precise. The school uses alternative provision for a small group of pupils and works with these providers to ensure that pupils' progress and attendance are monitored carefully.

Pupils value their learning and appreciate the guidance they receive from their teachers. Lessons are rarely disrupted and pupils follow instructions promptly. Around the school, pupils are respectful and follow the school rules. Staff apply the rules fairly and suspensions are used appropriately. Students in the sixth form, model positive behaviours with their maturity. Pupils are safe at school. They know that bullying is rare and not tolerated. Any serious incidents are responded to quickly and effectively by leaders. Pupils are encouraged to learn and reflect on their behaviour and the impact it has on others. This results in a noticeable improvement in individual pupil's behaviour over time.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have built an inclusive community, where pupils feel a real sense of belonging. Pupils know there is a network of care around them and appreciate the pastoral support they receive. Leaders work well with families to ensure that pupils' interests are put first. Typically, pupil records are kept up to date as their needs and circumstances change.

Leaders work diligently to identify the needs of individual learners. Relevant information is shared with staff so that they can support pupils in class. There is a clear approach so that barriers to learning are fully understood. Staff receive training on the appropriate strategies they can use to support pupils. However, at times there is variability in the quality of strategies used by teachers to help pupils fully access their learning. Some pupils are provided with additional interventions and help from other professionals. Leaders work with these external agencies very well and the swift provision of support has a clear impact on these young people.

All pupils have the opportunity to contribute to the life of the school and community. The pupil premium strategy is used to support both disadvantaged pupils' access to wider opportunities and further targeted support. It is too early to determine the impact of some of these initiatives. However, pupils who are disadvantaged generally achieve well.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils experience a well-constructed programme of lessons, assemblies and workshops that cover pupils' personal, social and health education. Resources are provided for staff to deliver lessons, and further training is underway to ensure that staff can address pupils' questions fully. Pupils develop a secure understanding of issues that concern them. This

includes respect for others and fundamental British values. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education. They have a clear understanding about consent, healthy relationships and how to recognise sexual harassment. Students in the sixth form follow their own programme with more mature themes, with some time to consider wider global affairs.

The school provides a broad offer of extra-curricular activities. Recently, they have expanded this offer with more musical opportunities, including performances and competitions. Pupils take part in a range of trips, including retreats, sponsored walks and sites of national interest. This extends their learning beyond the curriculum well. The school uses pupil premium funding to enable greater access for disadvantaged pupils to the range of activities available. Systems to monitor how much benefit pupils get from this work are in the early stages of development.

There are some opportunities for leadership, such as the school council, which pupils take seriously. Pupils are also encouraged to be involved in charity work and support the local community. The school welcomes in local pensioners for dinner and dances, along with supporting the local food bank. These events help pupils understand the importance of kindness and compassion. Pupils are proud to earn the values badges of the school and quickly learn to celebrate difference.

The school's careers programme helps pupils consider their choices post-16 and beyond. They hear from a range of external speakers and receive workshops on different pathways open to them. Some pupils receive additional tailored support to understand their options and prepare for further study and the world of work.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a thoughtful and ambitious post-16 curriculum. This prepares students well for their next stage of education, training or employment. The school is proactive about introducing other qualifications that suit students' interests and provide wider opportunities for them. Learning is sequenced so that students build their skills and knowledge progressively over the course of their study. Staff have clear expectations on how students should study independently, which has a positive impact on students' study habits.

Teachers are subject specialists. They know their students well and monitor their progress carefully to keep them on track. Consequently, students achieve the qualifications they need. Students who are disadvantaged and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. They benefit from comprehensive careers advice and guidance. Students feel prepared for their next steps and take part in meaningful work experience.

Students take their studies very seriously and are proud of their school. They behave with integrity and maturity. They are keen to mentor their younger peers and support the wider community. They care about each other's wellbeing and listen attentively to one another. Students are provided with clubs and societies, but the take up is not high. They follow a suitable personal development programme as part of their studies.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills as effectively as they could. Not enough pupils achieve highly in national tests and examinations. GCSE results are generally significantly below the national averages, including in mathematics. Across the curriculum, pupils do not make secure progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case for pupils who join with middle and higher prior attainment. A small number of pupils do not secure the skills they need because they struggle to read.

At times, pupils can draw links across their learning and produce some high-quality work. Disadvantaged pupils do better in some subjects and achieve close to national averages for disadvantaged pupils at key stage 4. In the sixth form, pupils gain A level and T level qualifications. As a small sixth form, the low number of students taking each subject means that the overall grades achieved are hard to compare to other sixth forms. Students in the sixth form secure the qualifications they need and move on to their preferred next steps in education, employment or training.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Teaching does not consistently check pupils' understanding effectively. This means that sometimes teaching misses opportunities to address gaps or correct misconceptions, when they arise. Likewise, at times pupils are ready to move on to more challenging content but this is not recognised or acted upon. Pupils follow a broad curriculum that is largely well designed to build on prior learning. Teachers have the subject expertise they need. Often teachers explain concepts clearly and help pupils understand key vocabulary and new ideas.

At times, resources and strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not used to full effect. Staff have the information they need about pupils with SEND. Leaders have provided training on how to adapt teaching to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. However, this is not fully embedded.

Pupils do not routinely receive the support they need in a timely manner to strengthen their core skills. Some pupils struggle with their reading and have not had the targeted help they need. This includes the teaching of phonics. Therefore, these pupils cannot fully access the curriculum. A culture of reading is not fully established across the school and teachers across subjects have not had the professional development they need to use reading strategies confidently during their lessons. Leaders have begun to prioritise reading across the school, for example introducing reading in form time and English interventions for small groups.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention ●

Some of leaders' actions to improve the school are in the early stages and have not had the required impact. There are some aspects of the school's work that would benefit from further

and more thorough quality assurance.

Leaders and governors know that the achievement of pupils is not where it should be. They have identified priorities and begun to codify aspects of the school's work to provide more consistency and establish higher expectations for what pupils can achieve. Training and support for staff have been put in place to help bring about change.

Leaders and governors have a shared understanding of the school's vision for the future. They are committed to providing for a highly disadvantaged community and ensuring that all pupils are nurtured and well cared for. Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised and pastoral care is a highlight. The school's values are commonly understood by pupils and staff. The school is working through a challenging period, which includes a restructure of staffing and leadership. Despite these tests, staff morale is high and they remain dedicated to the community they serve. This is to the credit of the leadership and governance of the school.

Governors meet their statutory responsibilities. They have confidence in the leadership of the school. Both governors and school leaders understand the priorities for improvement and that these are in the best interests of the pupils.

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

The school has a proud long-serving history in the community. It is firmly grounded in its ethos for pupils to become the best version of themselves. Staff support pupils in developing their confidence and resilience as well as the value in serving others. The values of the school are largely embodied by pupils, who are polite to adults and learn to have empathy for one another. This means that the school is calm and orderly.

The school is warm and welcoming. Pupils are happy and safe at school. They attend school very well and form positive relationships with staff. They know that there are adults to speak to if they need additional help. Pupils work hard in lessons and respect one another. This is put into practise at social times. Discrimination and bullying are not tolerated. If any issues or concerns do arise, staff are quick to respond.

Pupils follow a broad and ambitious curriculum. Typically, they achieve below national averages in their examinations. However, the achievement of pupils who are disadvantaged is close to national average at GCSE for disadvantaged pupils. Some pupils do not build their knowledge and skills as successfully as they could. This is because the curriculum is not delivered consistently to a high standard. While improvements are underway, it is too early to see the impact.

The school has a Roman Catholic character and works closely with the Faithful Companions of Jesus Sisters whose site is nearby. The school also values diversity, promotes learning about different faiths and beliefs and instils a deep sense of responsibility towards others. Pupils benefit from a range of events and clubs, including debating, volleyball and choir. These enrich pupils' school experience and support their personal and social development.

Next steps

- Leaders must ensure that pupils have the appropriate support to secure strong foundational knowledge and skills, particularly in reading, so that all pupils can access the curriculum successfully.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils' learning is carefully checked and teaching adapted accordingly to address misconceptions and/or to move pupils on to more challenging content.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently have the adaptations and reasonable adjustments they need in lessons.
 - Leaders should take the appropriate actions to drive improvement for pupils' attainment in national examinations.
 - Leaders and governors should ensure that they strategically implement and quality assure new processes and systems in place so that they have the required impact.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Elizabeth Carey.

The school is part of a federation called The FCJ Educational Trust.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders during the inspection. They also held meetings with the members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

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 Roman Catholic religious character. It underwent a section 48 inspection in October 2025.

The school makes use of three alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Headmaster: Mark Anthony

Lead inspector:

Sarah Saunders, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Katerina Christodoulou, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Paula Ledger, Ofsted Inspector

Amy Jackson, 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**

812

Below 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

917

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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

63.53%

Well above 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

3.69%

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

14.41%

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 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 (revised)	35.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.1%	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)	41.9	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.8	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.5	46.3	Below

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)	-0.58	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.33	-0.03	Below

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)	29.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.1%	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)	38.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.5	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)	-0.70	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.56	-0.57	Close to average

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)	29.5%	53.1%	-23.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	32.8%	53.1%	-20.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	30.1%	52.4%	-22.3 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)	38.9	50.4	-11.6
2023/24 (final)	38.3	50.0	-11.7
2022/23 (final)	34.5	50.3	-15.8

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)	-0.70	0.16	-0.86
2022/23 (final)	-0.56	0.17	-0.73

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)	84%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	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)	26.37	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.35	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.33	34.16	Below

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)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	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)	7.6%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.8%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	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)	19.5%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	18.5%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	20.8%	26.5%	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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