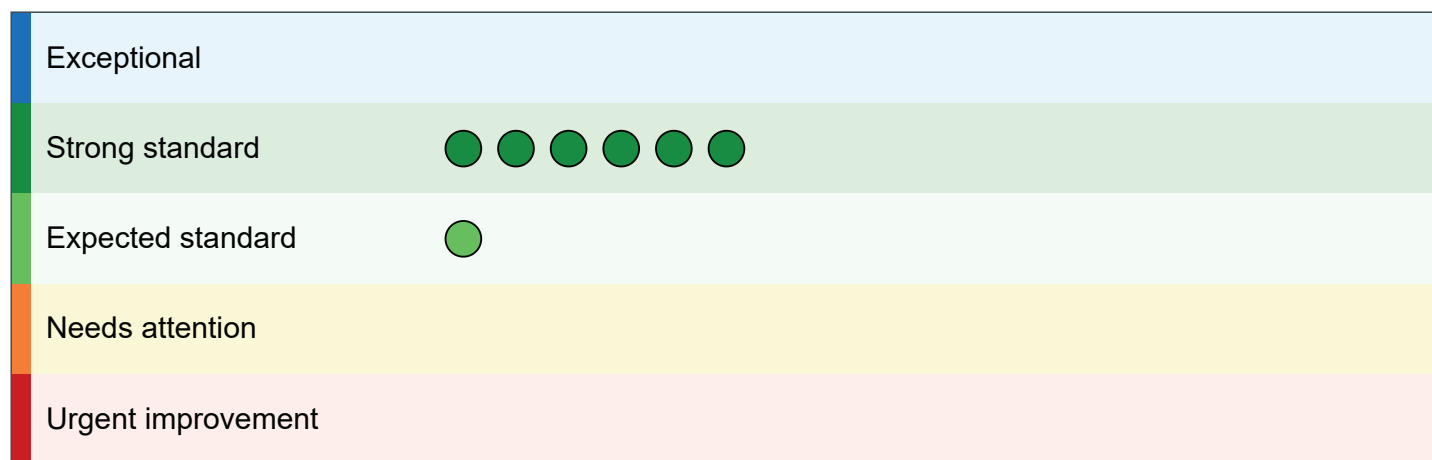


St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School

Address: Rotheram Avenue, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 5PP

Unique reference number (URN): 142263

Inspection report: 30 June 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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly from their various starting points. They are very well prepared for their next stage in education. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who reach the expected standards in reading and writing is consistently above national averages. Leaders' sharp focus on early reading has rapidly increased the proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check by the end of key stage 1. Pupils are confident and articulate speakers. Although outcomes in mathematics are not as high as in other subjects, in lessons, pupils confidently apply their knowledge of number to mathematical problems. Their detailed learning is not reflected in published outcomes.

Across the curriculum, pupils produce high-quality work. Pupils write at length in subjects such as history and geography, applying accurate grammatical skills and detailed subject knowledge. Disadvantaged pupils consistently achieve above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Any gaps in learning quickly close.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have well-established systems to maintain oversight of pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes. Leaders consistently promote the importance of regular attendance so most children attend well and arrive on time. Leaders keep a watchful eye on all pupils' attendance. When attendance begins to decline, leaders are quick to alert parents to any 'days lost for learning'. As a result, pupils' attendance is consistently in line with national averages and continues to improve. Leaders reduce barriers to punctuality or attendance effectively through highly personalised approaches that improve attendance quickly. Staff know which pupils find it difficult to come to school. They put sensitive plans in place so that these pupils settle quickly to learning.

Pupils behave impeccably. Leaders and staff set high expectations. They have established a calm, positive environment that is highly supportive for pupils' learning. Pupils listen attentively in class with high levels of motivation. Pupils are confident staff manage behaviour fairly. When pupils need help to manage their behaviour, leaders and staff work in partnership with parents to identify possible triggers and resolve issues. Extra support programmes help pupils build self-esteem and learn how to manage their emotions. Pupils show great respect for their peers and value their contributions to discussions.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established a broad, well-ordered curriculum. They continually check it remains high quality across different year groups and subjects. Subject experts provide highly effective support for teachers. This continually improves the quality of teaching. Leaders have prioritised improvements in phonics and mathematics. As a result, the curriculum is consistently well taught.

Leaders place a sharp focus on developing pupils' language and vocabulary through a rich diet of oracy and spoken English lessons. This supports pupils' fluency in both written and

spoken English. Pupils confidently apply these skills across the curriculum. Phonics is consistently well taught with daily reading practice. Regular checks on pupils' reading progress ensure that teaching closely matches their stage of development. Teachers quickly provide effective, extra support for pupils who have not secured the essential foundations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Across the curriculum, teachers expertly explain new learning. They consistently model new concepts precisely and break learning down into small steps. Frequent checks on pupils' understanding ensure learning is secure before teaching moves on. Teachers routinely use repetition to embed pupils' understanding. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to keep up. Any misunderstandings are swiftly addressed. Teaching for pupils with education, health and care plans is precisely matched to their needs.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion sits at the heart of leaders' decision-making. Well-established systems enable leaders to quickly identify pupils' needs and barriers to learning or wellbeing. Leaders and staff develop warm, open relationships with parents to understand pupils' needs and circumstances fully. Leaders use their detailed knowledge of pupils to provide timely support that is tailored to individual needs. Leaders ensure teachers and support staff have the knowledge they need to help disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, academically, socially and emotionally. Frequent review ensures this adapts as pupils' needs evolve. As a result, barriers to learning and attendance reduce, enabling pupils to flourish.

Leaders understand the challenges many families face in the local area. They focus on ensuring pupils' basic needs are met. This includes helping families access extra help and support, for example, the food bank. This work helps to remove barriers to pupils' wellbeing and learning. Leaders make well-informed decisions about how to use additional funding. This contributes to providing experiences that broaden the horizons of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Leaders tailor clubs to meet the pupils' interests, which maximises participation. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and become confident individuals. Highly effective strategies support pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders closely track pupils' progress and adapt support precisely to help them keep up with their learning.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders, trustees and the local academy committee understand the challenges that many families face in their community. Leaders place pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, along with those who face other barriers to learning, at the centre of their decision-making. Leaders have an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. Their clear and well-implemented strategic vision is driving rapid improvements in phonics outcomes, which have risen at a greater rate than national figures. Leaders have also improved the curriculum and teaching in the early years. Leaders' commitment to knowing pupils well and working in partnership with parents helps them secure high outcomes and excellent behaviour. This ensures that school is a positive experience for all pupils.

Trustees and the local academy committee support and challenge the school constructively. Their detailed insight into the school's needs helps them make timely decisions that sustain high standards of teaching, for example, by funding appropriate cover for teachers' planning, preparation and administration time.

Leaders have embedded a culture of ongoing professional learning. Staff routinely reflect upon their practice, enhance their expertise and gain further qualifications. Staff appreciate the decisions made to support their wellbeing and reduce their workload. For example, leaders have introduced more efficient systems for checking on pupils' progress.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The programme for personal development is extensive and carefully designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders respond highly effectively to the needs of different cohorts and what is happening socially. Pupils develop a deep understanding of moral and ethical issues. For example, they discuss topics such as slavery and ocean pollution. Pupils appreciate that the freedoms they enjoy are not shared by everyone around the world. Pupils' behaviours reflect the positive impact of the personal development programme. They are kind, courteous and confident. Older pupils act as positive role models when they help younger children to read. Leadership opportunities, such as serving as a prefect or faith ambassador, develop pupils' sense of responsibility. Pupils appreciate the diversity within their community. They respectfully share their knowledge about other faiths and cultures.

Career talks from local employers, alongside the opportunity to participate in the 'Brilliant club', raise pupils' aspirations for the future, such as studying law or going to university. Pupils develop detailed knowledge about the importance of keeping healthy and maintaining good dental hygiene. They understand friendship and the features of healthy relationships. Pupils recognise that family units can differ. Pupils learn how to stay safe online. Leaders ensure pupils learn about local risks. For example, they seek external expertise to talk to pupils about the devastating effects of knife crime. This contributes to pupils learning how to keep themselves safe outside of school.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, access an extensive array of clubs that promote pupils' sporting interests, appreciation of the arts and development of life skills, such as sewing. Each year, pupils learn to play a different tuned instrument. Together, these experiences promote perseverance and develop new interests and skills.

Staff quickly notice when pupils face personal, emotional or social challenges. They provide highly successful pastoral support that improves pupils' self-esteem and helps them learn to manage their emotions.

Expected standard ●

Early years

Expected standard ●

Leaders prioritise the early years. They have made significant improvements to the sequencing of the curriculum and organisation of learning. Warm, positive relationships

between staff and children mean that children happily explore and develop independence. Staff use high-quality interactions to support and guide children's learning in planned activities. Children enjoy daily story times and sharing books. As a result, children develop their communication skills and broaden their vocabulary. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access learning with their peers. Children develop their listening and attention skills, singing familiar rhymes with staff. They develop a sense of rhythm as they play along with percussion instruments.

Activities invite children to connect their learning across the curriculum. In general, these give children the opportunities to practise and refine their skills as they learn through play. For example, children develop their dexterity and coordination as they persevere using tweezers to move objects. However, some tasks are overly complex. Children have not secured the essential knowledge and skills they need to complete them, for example, cutting, sticking and sorting pictures in one activity. Consequently, children need a lot of guidance because there is too much information for them to process. This hinders the depth and detail of the knowledge they develop.

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

Inclusive practice sits at the heart of this school. Pupils attend regularly. They develop warm, trusting relationships with staff and have a deep sense of belonging. The school's Catholic ethos underpins pupils' positive social behaviours. Pupils behave impeccably. They are kind, respectful and courteous. Pupils listen to each other's ideas. They understand that at times there may be differences of opinion but value the contributions others make to discussions. Pupils appreciate and value their diverse community. Bullying is rare. Pupils relish social times. They play cooperatively and share outdoor equipment. Pupils feel safe. They know staff will listen to any concerns they have and help resolve these quickly.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Familiar routines and clear expectations enable pupils to focus on learning, celebrate their successes and understand how they can improve their work. Pupils aspire to do well because they know this will help them succeed in life. Pupils who need support to keep up with learning receive timely, highly effective help. As a result, gaps in pupils' learning close quickly. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. They achieve well in national tests. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they achieve successfully from their starting points. Some pupils with education, health and care plans benefit from learning in the Ark. This provides a quieter space tailored to their needs.

Pupils are becoming informed, socially aware individuals. They understand equality and injustice through studying topics such as slavery. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on what they learn. This enhances their social and moral understanding. Pupils access a range of clubs, such as sewing or boxing. These introduce new interests and develop life-long skills. Pupils enjoy educational visits, such as trips to the theatre or museums to view World War II artefacts.

Next steps

- Leaders should support the consistency of teaching across the early years, ensuring that staff make effective choices about how to teach children new skills and concepts across the curriculum so that children sustain focus and achieve the intended learning.
 - Leaders should ensure they continue to focus on raising achievement in mathematics so that pupils reach the same high standards in this subject as they do in others.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of St. Thomas Catholic Academies 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), Mark McLaughlin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jerzy Brzyski.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the CEO and members of the trustees during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Northampton. Its last section 48 inspection was 16 and 17 January 2025.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection and now has a pre-school and nursery class.

Headteacher: Steve Chiswell

Lead inspector:

Mireille MacRaid, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mandy Wilding, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Winwood, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Hynes, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

453

Well above 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

450

Above 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)

25.00%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

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

1.77%

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

12.14%

Close to 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	73%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	75%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	60%	Close to average

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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	85%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	78%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

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

Disadvantaged pupils 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	66%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	64%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59%	44%	Above

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	80%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	71%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	60%	Above

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	82%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	58%	Above

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	69%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	59%	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 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	66%	68%	-2 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	69%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	70%	67%	3 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	66%	-8 pp

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%	80%	1 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	81%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	80%	80%	0 pp
2022/23 (final)	88%	78%	10 pp

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	82%	78%	4 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	80%	78%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	82%	77%	5 pp

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	69%	80%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	70%	79%	-9 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	79%	-9 pp

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)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	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 (3 term)	11.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.7%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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