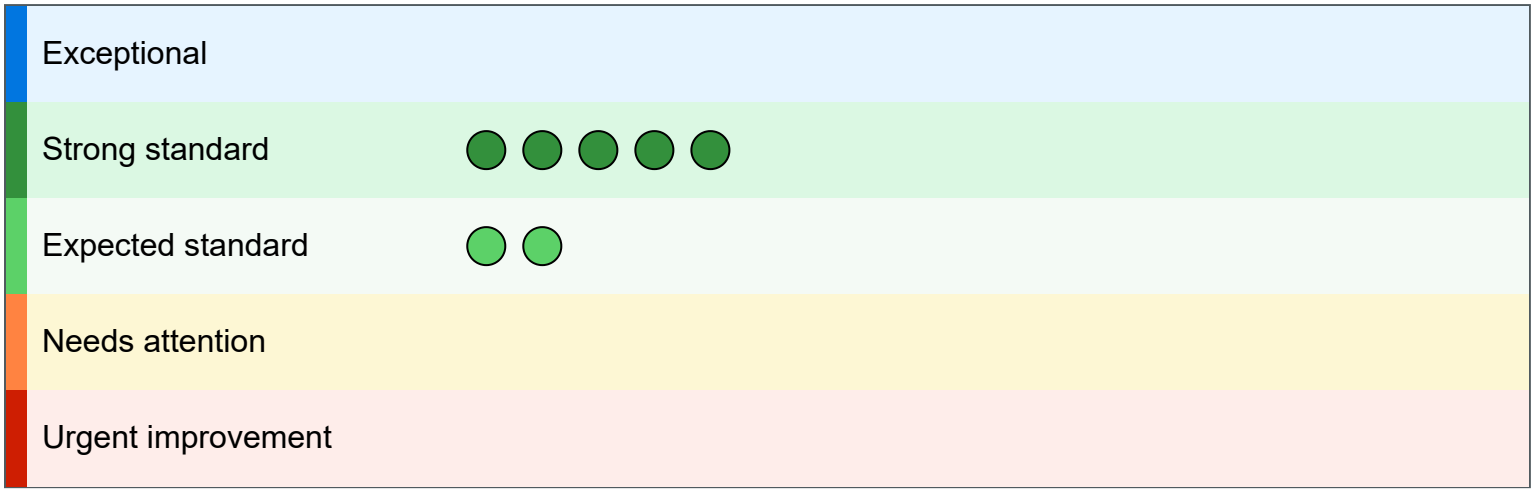
St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Address: Trench Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9NG

Unique reference number (URN): 141156

Inspection report: 13 October 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 and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their attainment in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above national averages. Pupils develop secure and fluent knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They build successfully on prior learning as they move through the school. This includes in early reading and phonics.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well from their starting points because leaders use additional funding thoughtfully to reduce barriers to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well from their starting points. Staff understand pupils' individual needs and adapt support carefully to help them access learning successfully. This consistently enables pupils to develop confidence, build secure knowledge and make progress through the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their success. The positive progress they make is evident across a range of subjects. Pupils leave school with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for their future learning.

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have established a clear vision for the early years that emphasises children's wider development. Staff create a nurturing environment, which helps children to settle quickly and develop confidence. Leaders and staff also establish positive relationships with families. Children are known as individuals and receive support that closely meets their specific needs.

The curriculum is carefully planned to build children's knowledge and skills over time. The school's approach to the teaching of phonics ensures that children develop early reading knowledge and skills. Communication and language are also given a high priority. Children are supported to develop their vocabulary through plentiful engagement with stories and discussion. Children are helped to grow in confidence, for example, through storytelling and performance. Such experiences capture children's imaginations and encourage them to retell and act out stories with enthusiasm. High-quality interactions with staff also support children's language development. Staff use questioning effectively to extend children's thinking and learning. Well-chosen activities, including den-building in the outside areas, help children to practise and apply their learning as well as develop curiosity and independence.

Children make a highly positive start to school. They achieve very well from their starting points. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face additional barriers receive the support they need to access the same curriculum as their peers. All children develop the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Strong standard

The school's work to promote inclusion is a strength. Leaders know pupils and their families extremely well. They work closely with them to identify needs and remove barriers to learning quickly. Staff also draw on support from external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the help they need to achieve well and participate fully in school life.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support that is carefully tailored to their individual needs. The school's 'Hive' provision offers pupils high-quality support with their speech and language development, helping pupils to build confidence, communication skills and emotional resilience. Pupils remain connected to their peers and access the same range of wider opportunities as other pupils wherever possible.

Leaders use additional funding thoughtfully. They use this funding well to help disadvantaged pupils overcome barriers to learning, attendance and wellbeing. Support is matched closely to individual circumstances. Disadvantaged pupils are also well supported to access the wider opportunities available across the school. This includes, for example, clubs, educational visits and leadership responsibilities.

The school also supports pupils who are known, or have previously been known, to social care effectively. Staff have an in-depth understanding of pupils' circumstances. They respond sensitively when additional support is needed. Leaders identify and respond quickly to other factors that may affect pupils' learning or wellbeing. This helps all pupils to learn successfully, develop confidence and play a full part in school life.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders fulfil their commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for every pupil. They know pupils, families and the local community well. Leaders' work is shaped by a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas they have prioritised for continued development. Leaders evaluate the school's work accurately and identify priorities that reflect pupils' needs. They use this understanding to strengthen provision swiftly, drawing effectively on support from the trust and wider professional networks when needed.

The school's culture is rooted in inclusion, respect and care for others. Leaders act quickly to support pupils and families when they face challenges or barriers to attending school. Staff value the support and professional learning available to them. They share leaders' ambition for all pupils to receive the best education possible. Professional learning helps staff to strengthen their expertise and respond effectively to the needs of pupils. Staff also value how leaders are understanding and supportive of workload and wellbeing.

Governors and trust leaders know the school well. They provide an effective balance of support and challenge. They fulfil their responsibilities well and maintain a clear focus on pupils' education, wellbeing and safety. Leaders engage constructively with parents and carers and external partners. They ensure that the school remains responsive to the needs of the community. Leaders' clear strategic direction and a shared commitment to improvement help to ensure that pupils remain at the centre of their decisions and consistently receive a high-quality education.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders place pupils' personal development and wellbeing at the heart of the school's work. The curriculum is carefully planned for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. As a result, it helps all pupils to develop the knowledge and confidence needed to thrive, both in school and beyond. Staff know pupils well. They provide effective pastoral support to pupils experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing or personal circumstances. Pupils are confident, articulate and eager to make a positive contribution to their school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Sporting activities, including football, golf and climbing, are particularly popular. Experiences, such as those in woodland learning, cadets, performances, clubs and leadership opportunities, all help pupils to develop resilience and independence. Pupils take pride in representing their school. They also see their leadership roles, including house captains and monitors, as important responsibilities. Pupil-led activities, such as drawing club, help pupils to develop responsibility and confidence.

Personal, social and health education helps pupils to understand healthy relationships as well as the importance of maintaining positive physical and mental health. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They understand online and offline risks and know where to seek support if they have concerns. They also talk confidently about fairness and treating others with kindness. The school's ethos is woven through daily life. Pupils develop respect for their own beliefs and those of others. They understand the importance of serving their community and supporting those in need.

Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils. They take seriously the responsibility of acting as role models. All pupils have access to the opportunities available. As a result, pupils who may face additional barriers participate fully in school life. Pupils leave the school feeling proud of their community. They are well prepared to make the most of the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have established clear systems to promote regular attendance. They understand the challenges that affect some pupils and families. Attendance has improved because leaders work closely with families and external agencies to offer support when concerns arise. Support is tailored to individual circumstances and helps many pupils attend more regularly. Attendance remains an area of ongoing focus for the school, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance for some of these pupils is not as high as that of their peers.

Pupils behave appropriately in lessons and around the school. They understand the school's expectations and respond positively to the routines that support learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. This helps to create a calm environment where

pupils can learn successfully. Staff deal promptly and effectively with incidents of bullying when they occur. The school makes appropriate adaptations for pupils who require additional support with behaviour or managing their emotions. This helps pupils to behave well and remain included in school life and learning. Throughout the school, pupils engage positively with their learning, meaning that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's context. It ensures that pupils gain a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences. Leaders oversee their subjects effectively. They think carefully about what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. They also regularly review how their subjects are taught, and support staff to develop their expertise and refine practice.

Teaching supports pupils to talk confidently about their learning in different subjects. It also helps pupils to successfully link previous learning to what they are learning now. The school's approach to promoting pupils' foundational knowledge in early reading is implemented consistently well. It helps pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.

Generally, teaching focuses well on helping pupils to build secure understanding of their learning over time. The school checks pupils' knowledge appropriately to identify where pupils need support or are ready to be challenged further. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to access the same curriculum as their peers. Classrooms are purposeful and pupils engage positively with learning. Nevertheless, in a few subjects, particularly in writing, some of the strengths in teaching are not currently as well embedded as they could be. Leaders are addressing this promptly to ensure it does not affect how highly pupils achieve in the long term. They continue to refine how consistently their curriculum expectations are realised across all areas of the school.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of this welcoming school community. Positive relationships with staff help pupils to feel known, valued and safe. Pupils are confident that staff listen to them and help them resolve worries or friendship difficulties should they arise. Pupils treat one another with respect. Their kind behaviour contributes to the calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school.

Pupils achieve highly and develop secure and deep knowledge and skills across the curriculum. The way that pupils' reading is developed is a particular strength of the school's work. Pupils develop a genuine enjoyment of books from an early age. Children in the early years settle quickly and develop confidence in their learning. Pupils across year groups also benefit from the way that the school uses its extensive outdoor spaces. For example, woodland learning and opportunities to explore the natural environment help pupils to develop curiosity and independence. Pupils also enjoy the wide range of clubs and sporting activities available to them. They take pride in representing their school and contributing to school life. Pupils view leadership roles as an important responsibility. Older pupils especially enjoy supporting younger pupils as buddies.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning, are included fully in the life of the school. Staff know individual pupils well. They provide high-quality support that helps pupils to participate successfully in learning and wider opportunities. Pupils behave appropriately in lessons and around the school. They understand the school's behaviour expectations and respond positively to established routines. Attendance has improved and most pupils now attend regularly. Pupils leave the school with the knowledge, experiences and personal qualities needed for their next steps in education and beyond. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to strengthen the consistency of curriculum implementation, particularly in writing, in order to maintain pupils' high achievement over time.
- Leaders should continue to refine their attendance strategies to secure, where needed, further improvements in attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

About this inspection

The school is part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Holmes.

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

This inspection took place from 13 October to 14 October 2026.

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, senior leaders and a range of teaching and non-teaching staff. Inspectors also met with members of the local governance committee and trustees. They met the CEO and members of the trust's central team. Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and during social times.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in January 2022.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Fiona Oubridge

Lead inspector:
Adam Vincent, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Penny Bullen, Ofsted Inspector
Louise Summers, 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 13 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

367
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: 268

School capacity

420
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)

11.17%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

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

3.54%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.98%
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

Well below 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	61%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	92%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	72%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	94%	73%	Above

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	44%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	78%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S

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‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

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

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	44%	69%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (1 term)	5.1%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.7%	5.5%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	13.8%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.6%	14.6%	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.

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