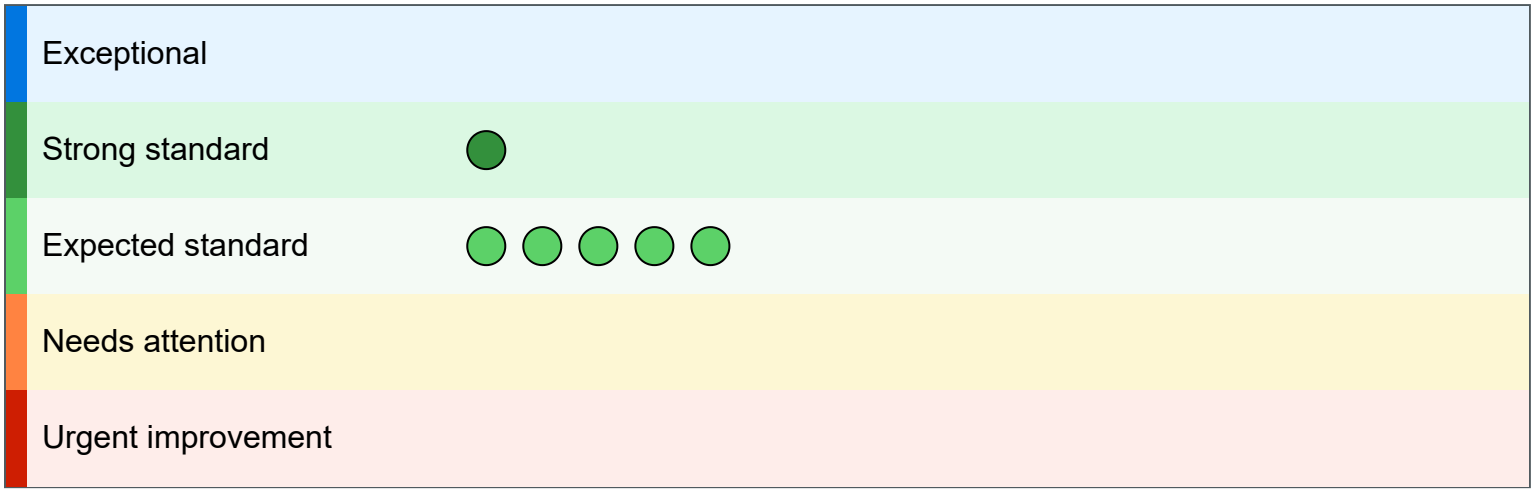
Foundations for LIFE School

Address: Essex House, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool, Merseyside, L30 4UE

Unique reference number (URN): 151376

Inspection report: 10 February 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.
- Insufficient evidence: Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Attendance has improved for most pupils from very low starting points. Leaders analyse patterns carefully and act quickly to prevent decline. Persistent absence is reducing because staff intervene early with families. Home visits help rebuild trust and encourage steady routines. Adapted timetables support pupils, who struggle with transitions. Reward systems motivate pupils to attend regularly. Leaders work with external agencies to reduce barriers, helping pupils to re-engage and sustain better attendance over time.

Pupils experience a calm and respectful environment that supports emotional security. Staff model positive communication that helps pupils manage interactions safely. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons and social spaces. Structured playtimes teach fairness and turn-taking. This reduces frustration and lowers behavioural risk. Relationships with adults are warm and trusting. Pupils say staff listen and help them feel safe. Bullying is rare and addressed quickly and firmly. Staff challenge discrimination, harassment and abuse without hesitation. Leaders ensure that behaviour policies are understood and applied with consistency. Staff adapt expectations for pupils who face additional barriers. They use calm routines and clear language to support de-escalation. Restorative approaches help pupils to repair relationships and reflect on their choices. Tailored timetables and therapeutic input reduce difficulties for pupils with complex needs. The school's culture ensures pupils feel known, supported and valued.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. They improve communication, emotional regulation and life skills. Their confidence grows as they develop greater independence. Many pupils explain their learning clearly and describe their personal achievements. Targeted support in reading, communication and self-regulation leads to swift improvement. These interventions match assessed needs and benefit pupils with significant communication barriers. Fundamental skills in reading and mathematics improve through structured teaching programmes. Staff provide individualised support that helps pupils secure essential routines. Pupils develop positive learning behaviours and access the curriculum with success. They practise key skills daily and apply them across different subjects. Staff use calm guidance to help pupils stay focused. Pupils also build resilience through regular encouragement and well-planned activities. Leaders check progress across academic, social and emotional areas. They use this information to refine support and strengthen learning. Pupils gain the knowledge and confidence needed for their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. They act with purpose to improve provision. The curriculum is broad, ambitious and shaped around

pupils' varied needs. Pupils study content that builds knowledge securely from their starting points. At secondary level, clear pathways teach key qualifications and life skills for next steps. Reading is prioritised through technology, librarian guidance and regular practice. Writing and mathematics teaching helps primary pupils, and older learners, secure essential knowledge. Teachers build pupils' spoken and written vocabulary across subjects.

Staff know pupils' needs well. Clinical assessments guide teachers' understanding of sensory, communication and learning barriers. This helps staff choose appropriate adaptations for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to social care. Calm routines, strong relationships and frequent checks support pupils' access to learning. When pupils fall behind, leaders provide targeted help from skilled staff. Leaders strengthen staff subject knowledge through training and external challenge. However, occasionally teachers do not select the most effective content. Some choices do not prepare pupils well enough for future learning.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school identifies pupils' needs with care and precision. Staff use clinical assessments and daily observations to understand each pupil. They support disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children known to social care. Staff also notice small changes that signal new worries or barriers. Pupils describe helpful adaptations that increase confidence and improve learning. Staff offer food, transport and clothing, which reduces barriers to attendance and engagement. They provide calm reassurance that helps pupils feel safe each day. Leaders work closely with other professionals, so looked after children receive joined-up support. They maintain consistent communication to guide decisions for each child.

Leaders use a clearly ordered approach that responds quickly to new concerns. Staff receive regular training that strengthens their understanding of pupils with complex needs. Training helps staff adapt teaching with greater confidence and accuracy. Leaders build robust links with families and external agencies to shape each pupil's support. They also ensure that enrichment is free, so all pupils join wider experiences. These opportunities help pupils develop confidence and independence.

Leaders track pupils' development, but systems can lack sharpness. They monitor academic, social and emotional growth carefully. However, some academic barriers are not identified as quickly as they could be. As a result, a few pupils do not receive timely adjustments to support their learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders promote an inclusive culture that supports vulnerable pupils effectively. Staff feel valued and receive regular training, clinical supervision and clear guidance. The proprietor acts decisively and provides resources promptly to improve provision. External support visits offer challenge and help refine leaders' priorities. Leaders understand the school's strengths and identify actions that strengthen practice. They respond quickly to concerns and take decisions in pupils' best interests. Governance is increasingly active and oversees safeguarding, behaviour and resource management with care. Governors hold leaders to account and offer informed challenge that supports improvement.

Leaders ensure staff access sustained and coherent professional learning. Staff wellbeing is considered in decision-making, and workload is reviewed thoughtfully. Leaders adapt provision for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known to social care. They act to remove barriers so these pupils receive effective support. Leaders maintain systems that help the school meet required standards. They monitor safeguarding, premises and policies with increasing precision. Leaders strengthen capacity for improvement through steady evaluation and purposeful action. Their work creates a stable environment, where pupils feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school offers a well-built personal development programme that promotes confidence and wellbeing. Daily yoga, sensory circuits and movement breaks help pupils regulate and prepare for learning. Pupils enjoy enrichment that includes climbing, museums, gardening and community placements. These experiences broaden horizons and help pupils discover new strengths. Pupils say enrichment helps them 'feel alive again', showing its emotional impact. Staff ensure disadvantaged pupils access all opportunities without barriers.

The programme builds pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils reflect on beliefs, consider ethical issues and learn to respect different values. Staff teach fairness, respectful language and the differences between people in society through real examples. Pupils develop cooperation and conflict resolution skills during structured activities. They learn about fundamental British values and engage with diverse communities. Work with external groups deepens pupils' understanding of race, prejudice and justice. Creative and cultural experiences strengthen pupils' appreciation of wider heritage.

Relationships and sex education is taught sensitively and clearly. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and staying safe online and offline. Personal, social and health education lessons help pupils manage emotions, understand risks and make informed choices. Staff support pupils experiencing challenges in their lives through tailored guidance.

Older pupils receive careers education. They meet relatable role models and explore different pathways. Supported placements help them test vocational interests. Staff prepare pupils for adulthood through clear guidance. Pupils learn skills for independent living, community participation and future employment. Leaders track involvement in personal development to strengthen future provision.

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

Pupils describe this school as an oasis during extremely difficult periods in their lives. Many arrive after long gaps in their education. They quickly feel safe, welcomed and understood. Staff greet them each morning with calm routines, sensory and physical activities and warm reassurance that help them settle. Pupils who arrive lacking confidence begin speaking within weeks because adults reduce fear through steady, patient support. Others who have previously struggled to eat now share meals confidently, encouraged by gentle, consistent care. These experiences help pupils rebuild trust in school and rediscover joy in learning.

Pupils enjoy lessons because tasks are adapted to how they learn best. Enrichment sparks curiosity, from nurturing herbs in the school garden to taking part in hands-on science experiments or youth centre projects. Many say this is the first time learning has felt safe and achievable. Pupils typically achieve well from their starting points.

Belonging shapes daily life. Pupils feel cared for because adults provide stability and kindness. This can be as simple as picking them up from home or washing their clothes when needed. Positive relationships help pupils form friendships and develop confidence. Looked-after children feel included because staff listen attentively. They work with professionals to secure the right support. Off site learning, like nursery placements or community visits, helps pupils build independence in safe and structured ways.

Pupils behave well because expectations are calm, consistent and rooted in an understanding of trauma. Staff guide them through difficult moments with patience. Pupils say bullying is taken seriously and that adults check in if something feels wrong. Attendance, often fragile on entry, improves. Pupils feel motivated to return to a place where they belong and believe in themselves again. They grow in resilience, take pride in small successes and begin to imagine hopeful futures; many for the first time.

Next steps

- Leaders should rigorously monitor the academic progress of pupils to ensure that any barriers to learning are swiftly and effectively addressed.
- Leaders should support teachers to consistently make highly effective choices about what to teach. This will ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training .

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with the proprietor and governing board.

To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.

Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This was the school's first standard inspection since it was registered by the Department for Education on 14 February 2025.

This school supports pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Places are commissioned by local authorities.

The name of the proprietor is Alekos Aresti.

The fees currently charged are £68,500 to £96,000.

The email address of the school is hello@foundationsforlife.co.uk

Headteacher: Sandra Scott

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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1. Quality of education provided — Standards met

All standards have been met.

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2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils — Standards met

All standards have been met.

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3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils — Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Helen Friend, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Pauline Rowland, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 10 February 2026

Total pupils

23

School capacity

32

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

23

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

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.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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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