

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Address: Lodge Lane, Hindsford, Atherton, Manchester, M46 9BN

Unique reference number (URN): 106499

Inspection report: 9 June 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that pupils build a strong foundation of skills and knowledge to prepare them well for their next steps in learning. Pupils largely secure the accuracy and fluency that they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Any gaps in pupils' basic skills are addressed effectively. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of key knowledge in subjects across the curriculum. They remember what they have been taught. Despite the high proportion of pupils who join from other schools, pupils attain as well as others nationally in the reading, writing and mathematics national tests and assessments by the end of Year 6. However, not as many pupils achieve the highest standards.

The support pupils receive makes a distinct contribution to pupils' progress. Pupils' work shows that those with English as an additional language keep pace with the taught curriculum as well as other pupils.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken suitable action to bring about improvements to the curriculum and teaching. They have changed the subject curriculums to be more specific about what they want pupils to know. Although these changes are fairly new, teachers are helping pupils to revise their prior learning more effectively.

Leaders have focused on ensuring that pupils' grasp of basic knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics is laying secure foundations for their future learning. Teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, the phonics programme clearly sets out what needs to be taught and when this should happen. However, at present, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explore their learning in greater depth.

Staff question pupils well and explain learning clearly so that pupils understand how to be successful. Teachers check on pupils' recall of what they have been taught to spot where any extra support is needed. Staff are aware of pupils' barriers to learning, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff support these pupils well to access the curriculum and overcome any gaps in key learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children make a positive start to their learning in the early years. They are cared for by nurturing staff who know them well.

Leaders have established a carefully-ordered curriculum. The important knowledge that children should learn is structured well to match children's interests and to develop their learning over time. The foundations of learning are prioritised. Children are rightly proud of

their handwriting and letter formation. Staff design interesting tasks to engage children in their learning. Staff's interactions typically support children's development and widen their vocabulary.

Phonics is taught with precision. Additional targeted support is provided to children who need it. As a result, children build secure phonics knowledge to read sentences well. Children are keen to talk about books they are reading, such as retelling the story of The Rainbow Fish.

Children, especially those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have their needs identified well and receive effective targeted support. Staff also form positive partnerships with parents and carers. Children achieve well and are generally well prepared for the move into Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately identify pupils' needs at an early stage and put appropriate support in place to address any barriers to learning. These systems include swiftly assessing the needs of new pupils who join from other schools.

Staff receive specialist training for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This takes place alongside the pupils that they support so that any individual barriers to learning are reduced. Staff help to build pupils' confidence, which contributes positively to their wellbeing.

Teachers are aware of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who may also have barriers to learning, such as the increasing proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers adapt their approach to support pupils' learning needs well. Typically, staff set high expectations for these pupils. Leaders ensure that there are a number of suitable programmes to help those pupils who need extra support. This means that they can keep up with the intended curriculum.

The pupil-premium strategy is well informed and accurately identifies the right priorities to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. Leaders' use of this funding is effective. It makes a positive difference to pupils' education.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have introduced a new personal, social, health and economic curriculum that is setting higher expectations for pupils' personal development. This ensures that pupils have a detailed awareness of what it means to be equal. Many pupils use their understanding of fundamental British values to inform the choices that they make. For example, pupils see individual liberty as a right to express their own opinions. However, they are equally respectful when others offer their own viewpoints. Leaders have ensured that most pupils are well prepared for the diversity of life in modern Britain.

The curriculum for relationships and health education successfully ensures that pupils understand what makes an appropriate relationship. They learn how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and look after their mental health. Pupils are taught to take steps to protect

themselves online and understand the risks of online activity and social media. Pupils also have an awareness of how to manage risk in other situations, such as resisting peer pressure.

Pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters includes a detailed understanding of different faiths and beliefs. They know how faiths differ and are similar in the way that they celebrate their own religions. Pupils' social development ensures that they cooperate with others well when learning.

Pupils are provided with effective support for their wellbeing. For example, some pupils have coaching sessions on how to recognise and deal with their emotions. Leaders ensure that staff cater for the needs of all pupils. The support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive ensures that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of the personal development programme. Pupils become responsible, confident members of the school community.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders have ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and the harmful effects of such behaviour. Although not common, leaders do not deal with incidents of bullying well enough. As a result, some pupils report that bullying continues because it has not been addressed well enough. Additionally, some staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently well. At times, they do not act as role models for pupils because they do not deal with issues in a calm manner. As a result, some pupils are left feeling frustrated.

In contrast, staff deal with the rare issues of more severe misbehaviour, such as violence and discrimination, quickly and effectively. Staff provide appropriate support for vulnerable pupils so that they manage their own emotions and feelings well. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning and demonstrate pride in their work.

Attendance is a clear priority for leaders. They have an accurate understanding of attendance patterns and closely monitor absence rates for different groups of pupils. Leaders address any specific barriers well so that most pupils attend school regularly and on time. This includes working with external agencies when needed. Leaders' actions are having a positive impact. Rates of persistent absence are declining and attendance is improving.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that the school's behaviour policy is consistently well implemented. As a result, staff do not deal with incidents of misbehaviour consistently well enough. The systems that leaders have in place do not enable them to identify and tackle some instances of bullying.

In contrast, leaders have a detailed understanding of the quality of provision at the school. They have correctly prioritised areas for improvement based on what will serve the best interests of pupils. For example, the recent initiatives to improve the curriculum and to ensure that pupils secure crucial knowledge in English and mathematics have borne fruit.

Governors understand the school's context well and ensure that their statutory duties are met. They question leaders well about the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve the school. Governors prioritise staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff appreciate the opportunities that they have to develop their professional practice.

Leaders engage well with parents and carers and with local community groups to ensure that pupils get the most out of the range of opportunities on offer at the school. They work well with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support that they need to achieve well.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They generally have positive relationships with staff and other pupils and they feel safe. Pupils who are new to school find it easy to make friends. Many pupils behave well. However, some aspects of pupils behaviour are not dealt with appropriately. Although uncommon, some incidents of bullying are not addressed well enough. Additionally, some staff do not follow the behaviour policy consistently well.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about interesting topics. Teachers ensure that pupils consolidate, and build upon, their prior knowledge so that they are well prepared for their next steps in learning. Pupils achieve well. This is reflected in the results from the key stage 2 national tests and assessments.

Leaders identify any barriers to learning that pupils may have at an early stage. Staff are adept at addressing pupils' learning and wellbeing needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable groups generally progress well through the curriculum.

Leaders have supported pupils well to help them to attend school regularly. Many pupils are proud to be part of the school and most pupils feel valued and included. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, have opportunities to participate in clubs and sports competitions.

An array of enrichment activities ensure that pupils have a broad range of experiences. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in sporting activities and a number of clubs, such as darts, curling and chess. Pupils also benefit from visitors to the school and trips out in the community. For instance, pupils learn about disability and equality from visiting speakers and they relish the chance to go on a residential trip where they develop their team building skills.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they have an accurate understanding of matters related to bullying so that they deal with incidents more effectively.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff model the behaviours that are expected from everyone, so that they apply the behaviour policy consistently well and deal with incidents of low-level behaviour in a calm, measured and fair manner.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers provide pupils with greater opportunities to deepen their understanding of key knowledge so that they know even more about the subjects they study across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Anna Herko.

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, other leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. They meet with members of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change in staffing and governance since the last inspection. There are number of new teaching assistants at the school as well as 3 new teachers, including a new deputy headteacher. All but 2 governors are new to their role.

Ian McDermott: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Christopher McDonald, Ofsted Inspector

Jonny Foster-Carr, His Majesty's 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

174

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: 272

School capacity

210

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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

41.95%

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: 26.3%

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

4.60%

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

12.64%

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

Close to 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	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

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	68%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	75%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	73%	Below

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	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	71%	Below

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%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	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 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%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	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	50%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	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	58%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (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	71%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	46%	68%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	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	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (final)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	80%	-25 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	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	58%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	78%	78%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	78%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	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	71%	80%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	78%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	79%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘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
2024/25 (3 term)	6.2%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	Above
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)	15.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	14.7%	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.

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