

Whalley Church of England Primary School

Address: Church Lane, Whalley, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 9SY

Unique reference number (URN): 119429

Inspection report: 10 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.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly and accurately. This means that pupils consistently receive the right support from the start. Staff know their pupils well. They act on advice from specialists and families. This means that pupils can learn successfully alongside their peers. Leaders have built close relationships with families and external agencies. This helps to shape the support pupils receive and raises their aspirations. When specialist help is needed, it is arranged without delay. Pupils known to children's social care receive the same carefully considered support.

Leaders make sure all staff are highly trained to meet the needs of every pupil. Staff understand how to support each pupil effectively. They remove barriers effectively so that every pupil can access learning. Leaders monitor the impact of support closely. They make swift adjustments if something is not working as well as intended.

Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent wisely. It is targeted at strategies that make a tangible difference. Leaders check carefully that pupils are benefiting from this support. They consider academic progress and involvement in clubs, visits and activities. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and take a full part in school life alongside their peers.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

At the end of Year 6, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above national averages. Many pupils achieve at a higher level. Disadvantaged pupils perform better than disadvantaged pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics. However, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at this school is not narrowing. Leaders are working to address it. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well alongside their peers.

In younger year groups, pupils achieve well overall. Achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check is close to the national average. So is achievement in the Year 4 multiplication tables check. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils recall what they have learned and apply it to new learning. They progress steadily through the curriculum. Occasionally, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, particularly in subjects beyond English and mathematics.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Attendance at the school is above the national average. Leaders have high expectations for attendance from the moment pupils start school. Leaders analyse attendance information carefully. This helps them spot patterns and address concerns swiftly. Their positive

relationships with parents and carers mean concerns are tackled early. Where pupils need individual support to improve their attendance, leaders put this in place promptly.

Leaders and staff have created a calm, respectful and welcoming school. Bullying is not tolerated and is rare. When concerns about behaviour arise, most staff address them effectively. Any form of discrimination or harassment is dealt with quickly and consistently. Staff know pupils well and usually apply the behaviour policy effectively. Pupils are polite, friendly and play cooperatively at breaktimes. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to their learning. They concentrate well in lessons and engage with what they are being taught. Occasionally, low-level disruption in some classrooms means that not all pupils are able to focus on their learning as well as they should. Pupils who sometimes find it difficult to focus are well supported. Staff give these pupils regular breaks during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the adjustments they need to learn well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching in the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It covers reading, writing and mathematics, alongside a wide range of other subjects. It is well sequenced so that pupils typically build their knowledge securely. Staff help pupils to develop their vocabulary across subjects. Pupils are given opportunities to use new words in their speaking and writing.

Staff are well trained to teach the subjects they cover. Reading and mathematics are taught well. In writing, leaders have acted quickly in response to pupils' weaker skills, such as in handwriting. Books show improving quality of work, particularly in English and mathematics and across key stage 1. There is more to do before this becomes consistent across other subjects.

Typically, staff use a range of ways of teaching. They revisit what pupils already know and ask careful questions to check understanding. Staff make suitable adaptations to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Occasionally, in subjects beyond English and mathematics, staff do not address pupils' misunderstandings effectively. This means that some pupils do not progress as well as they might in some subjects.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years benefit from a well-planned curriculum. Children's personal, social and emotional development is prioritised from the start. Staff also place a high priority on developing children's listening, language and communication skills. This means that children build the knowledge they need for later learning. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Staff are knowledgeable and caring. They talk with children throughout the day and introduce new words at every opportunity. Children hear new vocabulary, practise using it and grow in confidence. Songs, rhymes and stories bring language and early reading to life. Daily phonics lessons help children learn to read and write words and simple sentences accurately.

Staff work closely with local nurseries and parents and carers, often before children start school. This helps staff understand what children already know. Children settle quickly and feel at home. Staff identify any special educational needs and/or disabilities promptly. Support is put in place so that every child can learn alongside their peers.

Occasionally, expectations for some children are not high enough. Some children could achieve more than they currently do, particularly in writing, given what they already know and can do.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school well. They have clear systems that support them to check the quality of the school's work. They are perceptive about its strengths and areas for development. Leaders make considered decisions to support improvement, always with pupils' best interests at heart. Leaders are particularly focused on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are working to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Leaders check carefully that vulnerable pupils are receiving the support they need. For example, leaders have recently strengthened the reading and mathematics curriculums to further raise attainment.

Governors share leaders' clear vision to give every pupil the best start in life. They are committed to the school and bring a range of expertise and experience to their role. They fulfil their statutory duties, including providing effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Governors help set the school's priorities for improvement. They ask leaders challenging questions on matters, such as pupils' achievement and behaviour, while providing ongoing support to staff.

The school's Christian ethos and values are visible in the way that leaders, including governors, support and engage with pupils, staff, families and the community. Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and take workload into account when introducing changes. All staff, including early career teachers, benefit from well-planned training, professional learning and support that helps them teach effectively and support pupils well. Staff are skilled and committed to pupils' success. As a result, pupils receive consistent, caring support from everyone in the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Whalley Church of England Primary School has a well-structured programme to support pupils' personal development. Pupils study personal, social, health and economic education. This helps them to reflect thoughtfully on a range of issues that matter in their lives. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They listen respectfully to the views of others. Pupils understand what fundamental British values mean. They can give examples of how they put these into practice at school and in their community. Leaders are reviewing the programme so that it better meets the needs of all groups of pupils.

The school's Church of England ethos shapes pupils' spiritual development in a meaningful way. Pupils engage with prayer, assemblies and church visits. They study and celebrate a range of world religions, including Islam and Judaism. This builds genuine understanding of

each other's beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles across a range of areas. These roles help pupils to develop confidence, communication skills and empathy. Through 'Fantastic Friday' activities, pupils try new things and discover new interests. Educational visits, residential trips and outdoor learning extend pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils take a full part in all of these opportunities.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to recognise when relationships are unhealthy. They understand how to stay safe online, at home and on the road. They know who to turn to for help. Staff teach these areas in a way that is matched to pupils' age and understanding. Pupils develop an understanding of how to look after their physical and mental health. Leaders check carefully that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are taking part in and benefiting from what the school offers.

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

Pupils at Whalley Church of England Primary School are happy, safe and well cared for. Staff know every pupil by name. The 'Whalley Way' shapes how everyone here behaves. Its four values, 'do your best, respect others, make good choices, be thankful', give the school a clear identity.

Pupils say they feel safe. They know who to speak to if something is wrong. Adults listen and act in a timely manner. Bullying is rare. When it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around school. They show positive attitudes to their learning. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils come to school regularly and on time.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and the wide range of experiences beyond them. Trips bring their learning to life. For example, pupils visit Hadrian's Wall and toast marshmallows in outdoor learning. Year 6 pupils finish primary school with a 3-day residential. Clubs throughout the day allow pupils to experience sports, art, cooking and more. Older pupils take on important responsibilities. They read with younger children and lead playground activities. They also represent their peers on the school council. In Year 6, every pupil has a leadership role.

Pupils generally understand the world beyond their school and community. Most can explain what fundamental British values mean and give examples from their own lives. They hear directly from classmates about different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and how to recognise unhealthy relationships.

Pupils progress steadily through the curriculum. In national tests, outcomes are consistently above national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in every aspect of school life. So are those who are disadvantaged. No child is left on the sidelines. Children in the early years make a confident start to their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff address occasional gaps in some pupils' knowledge beyond English and mathematics.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently have high enough expectations for all children in the early years, particularly in writing, so that those who are capable of achieving more are given the opportunity to do so.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Borland.

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 and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese. She also spoke with a group of governors that included the chair of the governing body.

Inspectors visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at curriculum information and pupils' workbooks. They reviewed school documentation that included: the school's self-evaluation document; the school development plan; external quality assurance visit records and governing body meeting minutes records.

Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers and considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is a Church of England school and is registered as having a Christian religious character. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in October 2025.

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Richard Blackburn

Lead inspector:

Dianne Holcroft, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joe Dryland, Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Gough, 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 10 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

310

Close to 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

315

Close to 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)

7.74%

Well below 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

2.90%

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

11.61%

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 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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	81%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	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 (revised)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	84%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	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	86%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	61%	46%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	46%	Above
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	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	83%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	62%	Above
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	67%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	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	83%	60%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	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	61%	68%	-7 pp
2024/25 (revised)	83%	69%	14 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	67%	-5 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	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	83%	81%	3 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	80%	-5 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	67%	78%	-11 pp
2024/25 (revised)	83%	78%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	63%	78%	-15 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	83%	80%	4 pp
2024/25 (revised)	83%	81%	3 pp
2023/24 (final)	88%	79%	8 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 (2 term)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	5.9%	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)	5.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.7%	16.2%	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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



