

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Address: Lynwood Road, BB2 6HQ

Unique reference number (URN): 119510

Inspection report: 11 November 2025

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 consider carefully and act swiftly to address any barriers that pupils face. Staff know pupils' needs and their starting points well. Leaders act on this information appropriately. They ensure that extra funding is used effectively. For example, they employ additional staff who skilfully support disadvantaged pupils with their learning. Over time, disadvantaged pupils and other groups of pupils at the school achieve well. Pupils, parents and carers speak highly of the support the school provides.

Leaders and staff have an expert understanding of how to help pupils who speak English as an additional language. They provide effective support, such as through the help of bilingual support staff. They tackle any challenges for pupils. This helps pupils to learn the curriculum well.

Leaders ensure that staff have the right knowledge and support to quickly identify and help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They carefully check the impact of the support they put in place with other professionals and with parents. Senior leaders review the wider impact of the school's inclusion work with skill and determination.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils recall their prior learning in different subjects. They are eager to know even more. Published data shows that pupils' attainment, by the end of Year 6, is broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. As many pupils join and leave the school at different times, this information does not fully reflect the impact of the school's work. Pupils who spend all their primary education at the school attain well.

Gaps in pupils' subject understanding close quickly because of leaders' careful attention to their individual needs. Leaders use their deep understanding of how pupils who speak English as an additional language can best be helped to learn English. All groups of pupils achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils develop the phonics knowledge that they need. Mostly, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 develop their skills in handwriting, grammar and spelling, but sometimes pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders track and analyse absence information very carefully. This helps them to understand the causes of pupil absence. Staff take appropriate action to improve attendance. As a result of the work of leaders and staff, pupils' attendance is improving over time and persistent absence is reducing.

Pupils arrive punctually at school to begin their studies. They are greeted by staff, who welcome them warmly. Pupils across the school settle quickly into activities in classes. They revisit previous learning before main lessons begin.

Pupils behave very well. They are effectively supported by staff to understand and follow the school rules. Routines are well established from the start. Pupils are keen to learn in lessons and love sharing what they know with others. For pupils who are new to living in the UK, leaders' very clear and effective arrangements help them to settle in quickly. Respect and self-control are at the heart of the school's culture. Pupils who struggle to manage their feelings and actions learn quickly how to behave well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that subject curriculums are well organised and enable staff to teach essential knowledge in a logical order. Leaders select topics and activities that enhance pupils' engagement and learning. For example, staff deepen older pupils' knowledge of history and science through thoughtful, educational trips. If pupils miss learning due to absence, they get extra support to catch up on missed work. Staff teach key knowledge clearly and use their careful checks of what pupils know to spot where pupils need more practice or are ready to move on.

Leaders' training and support for staff on curriculum content and teaching is well thought out. They ensure that subject expertise, such as in early reading, is shared by the whole team. Leaders put communication, language, phonics and reading at the heart of the school's curriculum. Well-matched reading books and effective teaching help pupils to develop their reading skills.

Recently, leaders have revised the school's mathematics curriculum so pupils can explain their mathematical knowledge consistently well. Typically, teaching helps pupils to build and refine their skills in grammar, spelling and handwriting. However, sometimes teaching in this area of the curriculum does not give pupils enough practice to secure these skills before moving on.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff talk with children often, modelling the use of important words and showing children how to listen and cooperate with others. Teachers lead this work skilfully, demonstrating the joy of language, stories and rhymes. The school's well-thought-out reading curriculum begins well in the Reception class. Teachers inspire children's curiosity about characters in stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Leaders ensure that staff build skilfully on children's play. Staff introduce children to phonics as quickly and effectively as possible. In addition, staff ensure that children develop their imagination and physical skills. Children make a secure start in learning to write.

Leaders ensure that staff prioritise helping children to settle into clear routines. Children quickly learn how to behave well as part of a group. They learn to follow instructions and respect other children's choices and personal space. When children face difficulties in their

learning, staff link very effectively with parents, carers, previous settings and with other professionals. This ensures that children's needs are quickly spotted and understood. As a result, the early years plays a key role in the early identification and support of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the context of the school and the challenges it faces. They use their clear understanding of the needs of pupils, families and the community to shape the school's priorities for improvement. At the heart of the school's success is leaders' thoughtful attention to each pupil's unique circumstances and needs. Leaders are determined that they and staff support pupils' education effectively, including for those pupils who are new to the UK. Typically, leaders' decisions focus on whether the support that staff provide is right for each pupil at this point of their education. This means, for example, that effective support is in place to help the many pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Leaders ensure that staff, including those new to teaching, benefit from the training and individual support programmes that leaders provide. Staff learn words in different languages from one another so they can better support pupils who speak EAL. Staff feel valued and motivated. They benefit from the supportive culture that leaders have established, including on behaviour and special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders take action to ensure that staff have a reasonable workload, such as through the recently revised marking scheme.

Governors understand their role. They keep their focus on the school's long-term priorities and challenges. Governors provide some challenge as well as support to leaders. However, some of their understanding of the leaders' curriculum priorities is not well developed, which holds them back from being as effective as they could be.

Personal development and well-being

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils develop the knowledge that they need for their future lives. For example, pupils learn about online safety, healthy relationships and healthy eating. Pupils secure valuable knowledge about these important topics; for instance, pupils speak confidently about the importance of protein in a healthy diet.

Pupils' responsibilities as prefects and school councillors are well established. Pupils play a role in school life, such as chaplains leading a silence on Remembrance Day. Leaders think carefully about whether any disadvantaged pupils need extra help. They put this in place; for example, leaders arrange individual support for pupils who need help with their emotions and mental health. This enhances pupils' ability to feel calm and ready to learn.

Throughout the school, pupils have many positive, friendly relationships. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils know how families and communities can be unique. They recognise that people may have different but equally rich cultures and beliefs to one another.

Pupils live by the values that leaders have introduced at the school. They understand the need for harmony between different communities. They value opportunities to take part in charitable fundraising. Pupils understand important concepts such as tolerance. They know about the rule of law. However, pupils are less able to explain these concepts as fundamental British values and the place of these in British life.

Older pupils relished their recent, inspiring visit to a local university and recall this in detail. Leaders and staff help pupils to be ambitious for their future lives. For example, several pupils aspire to be a dentist, artist, teacher, lawyer, hospital doctor or GP.

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

Pupils feel safe because leaders ensure that they are welcomed, included and able to express their thoughts and opinions. Leaders and staff are deeply interested in each child's unique needs and life experiences. Pupils who join the school in different year groups and at different times of the year, including those who speak English as an additional language, have many opportunities to settle in and to learn the curriculum effectively. For example, in the early years, staff meet with parents and carers of children who are new to living in the UK. Staff seek to understand and support children's language needs. They assess accurately whether children have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils at the school flourish. They are happy, feel good about themselves and develop many friendships. In classrooms and around the school, pupils' behaviour is thoughtful and sensible. Pupils show high levels of self-control. For example, they enter the hall for special assemblies in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils typically know and rise to leaders' high expectations for their conduct. Leaders deal with issues of bullying effectively, giving pupils the support that they need.

Pupils enjoy their studies and apply themselves well in lessons. Classrooms are calm. Teaching focuses on helping pupils to learn the curriculum and achieve well.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities that the school provides. For example, older pupils relish being prefects and helping younger pupils, such as with their reading. Pupils gain much knowledge from the school's educational trips, for example to castles, farms, museums and the zoo.

Pupils learn to be interested in, and respectful of, other people's views and lives. Leaders promote care and compassion. Pupils' attendance at the school is improving over time because of the actions that leaders take.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the teaching of writing improves pupils' foundational knowledge of grammar, spelling and the quality of their handwriting.
 - Governors should deepen their understanding of the school's curriculum priorities so that they are well placed to challenge and support leaders' work.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils understand how the school's values that they follow in their behaviour and conduct link with fundamental British values.
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About this inspection

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 and several other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection.

Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, local authority and the diocese.

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 registered as having a Catholic religious character. The next section 48 inspection of the school is expected in the 2025–26 academic year.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Michael Parker

Lead inspector:

Tim Vaughan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rebecca Jewitt, His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Dymond, 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 11 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

180

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)

23.89%

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

3.33%

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

11.67%

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 maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	61%	Below
2024/25	60%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	43%	61%	Below
2022/23	52%	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	65%	74%	Below
2024/25	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	53%	74%	Below
2022/23	68%	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	78%	72%	Above
2024/25	80%	72%	Above
2023/24	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	81%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	73%	Below
2024/25	63%	74%	Below
2023/24	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	65%	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 maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	46%	Close to average
2024/25	50%	47%	Close to average
2023/24	50%	46%	Close to average
2022/23	43%	44%	Close to average

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	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25	67%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	50%	62%	Below
2022/23	43%	60%	Below

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	70%	59%	Above
2024/25	75%	59%	Above
2023/24	63%	58%	Close to average
2022/23	71%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	50%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	75%	59%	Above
2022/23	57%	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 maths

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	48%	68%	-19 pp
2024/25	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24	50%	67%	-17 pp
2022/23	43%	66%	-23 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	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23	43%	78%	-35 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	70%	78%	-7 pp
2024/25	75%	78%	-3 pp
2023/24	63%	78%	-15 pp
2022/23	71%	77%	-6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	59%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24	75%	79%	-4 pp
2022/23	57%	79%	-22 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 (1 term)	6.2%	5.1%	Above
2023/24	8.1%	5.5%	Above
2022/23	8.7%	5.9%	Above

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 (1 term)	22.5%	14.3%	Above
2023/24	26.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23	31.0%	16.2%	Above

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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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