

# Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Roman Catholic High School

**Address:** Gibfield Road, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 8JT

**Unique reference number (URN):** 119785

## Inspection report: 19 May 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

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well developed and appropriately ordered. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe, including when online. The curriculum reflects local emerging issues, such as water safety and the dangers of knife crime.

Pupils have a secure and detailed knowledge of the PSHE curriculum, alongside those for relationships and sex education and citizenship. They can talk in depth about topics such as healthy relationships, consent and misogyny. Pupils understand that everyone is unique and should be respected. They confidently articulate their understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders also ensure that any emerging pastoral needs of pupils are met, whether through the curriculum or through the highly effective pastoral support that they receive.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a wide range of personal development opportunities. These include memorable trips to Auschwitz and the Houses of Parliament. Many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and grow their talents through, for example, cheerleading, role-playing club and glow-in-the-dark dodgeball. Pupils are proud of their school's sporting successes. Pupils contribute to their school community and build leadership skills through one of the many ambassador roles.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to learn about options for further education and employment when they leave school. Pupils gain additional insight through visiting speakers from local colleges and participating in work experience. Younger pupils take part in 'world of work' days to immerse them in local employment matters. Pupils successfully move on to study ambitious courses or to pursue apprenticeships linked to their ambitions.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils achieve well. This means they gain the qualifications they need to access ambitious courses of study when they leave. In the most recent key stage 4 examinations, pupils achieved results in line with the national average across many subjects. Consequently, they are ready for their next stage of education or training.

Most recently, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in national examinations was in line with that of disadvantaged pupils nationally. The gap between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment nationally is narrowing.

In most lessons, pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed across the curriculum. Leaders have taken effective actions to address subjects where progress may be less positive. Pupils' current work in these subjects already reflects a greater depth of knowledge over time.

## Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have an informed and accurate understanding of attendance and behaviour. They have put in place systems to monitor the patterns of both. Overall attendance is in line with the national average. This includes for pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When pupils find regular attendance difficult, leaders put tailored support in place. This is having a positive impact. Leaders are focused on ensuring that all pupils feel they belong in this school.

Positive relationships are evident between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. There is a family-like atmosphere in this school. Discrimination, harassment and derogatory language are not tolerated. Pupils are polite and respectful. For example, they hold doors open for each other and consistently say 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils manage their own behaviour well, both in lessons and at social times. They require few reminders about their conduct. Suspensions and persistent absence are reducing over time for most pupils. When pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, leaders ensure that the support these pupils need is in place.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders are well informed about the quality of the curriculum and teaching. The curriculum is broad and well designed. Over the past two years, leaders have raised standards of teaching. This is evident, for example, in history and geography. However, there is some variation in how consistently these higher expectations are met. Teaching in a minority of subjects is less well developed.

Staff draw on opportunities for professional learning to make sure they have the expertise they need to ensure that pupils remember what they are taught. Because of this, most pupils develop secure knowledge across the curriculum and generally learn well.

Where pupils have barriers to their learning, leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to meet these pupils' needs. Most staff use this knowledge of individual pupils to adjust how they teach in helpful ways. Consequently, these pupils progress well.

Leaders are aware of pupils who have not yet reached an age-appropriate level of fluency in reading and writing. They use a range of effective support strategies, including teaching phonics, to support these pupils in closing the gap in their skills. Interventions for numeracy and handwriting are also in place.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They respond well to pupils' changing needs. Leaders ensure

that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND have the same access to the school's many enriching opportunities. For instance, leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have the ingredients and equipment they need for food technology and art lessons. They also provide a food club where pupils learn how to cook a family meal to take home.

Leaders provide staff with detailed information about the most useful ways to support pupils with SEND, including pupils with education, health and care plans. Most staff use this information effectively to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Nevertheless, this is not consistent across classrooms.

Leaders work with a range of external agencies to provide specialist help for pupils who need it. Leaders carefully use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to support the attendance and academic progress of pupils who may face barriers to success. For example, leaders have invested in psychological services to support pupils. This is helping some pupils to attend school more often and to achieve well. Leaders ensure that pupils known to social care are supported appropriately.

Alternative provision is used appropriately. Leaders check this closely to ensure that it is having a positive impact on pupils.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders, including governors, have a precise knowledge of the school's strengths and areas where development is still required. Their decisions are in the best interest of pupils, especially those who are more vulnerable. Recent changes have successfully brought about tangible improvements in pupils' behaviour and their academic results. Staff morale is high. Staff are proud to work at this school and are universally supportive of the decisions that leaders have taken.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They support and challenge school leaders in equal measure. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

Leaders have ensured that staff, including those in the earliest stages of their teaching careers, have the training they need to meet pupils' needs. Leaders have considered staff's workload and wellbeing when making changes that affect them.

Parents and carers speak highly of school leaders. Leaders promote communication with parents, for example, through regular newsletters. Parents value this, alongside events such as the well-attended revision support sessions, which help them to support their children at home.

Leaders at Ss John Fisher and Thomas More are role models for the pupils in their care. They have made substantial progress in school improvement in the past 2 years and are well on their way to fulfilling the school's mission.

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

This school is underpinned by its motto of 'faith, work, love'. Pupils show faith in their teachers, who support them well. They work hard and progress well. Year 11 pupils show resilience and a determination to succeed. There is a climate of love and mutual respect. This is reflected in the warm relationships between all in this school community. Pupils know that staff care about them, which helps them to feel safe. Older pupils say they will be sad to leave, exemplifying the clear sense of pride in this school from pupils and staff.

Pupils benefit from an impressive range of opportunities to further their personal development. These range from American football to music clubs, such as 'Chord for the Lord'. Pupils grow into young people well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a deep understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and individual liberty. Pupils build a secure knowledge of the options open to them when they leave school. They are clear about how to achieve their ambitions. Pupils leave the school ready to take their next steps into further education, employment or training.

Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour in lessons is calm and purposeful, just as it is at social times. Pupils require few reminders to do the right thing. Negative behaviours, such as bullying, occur rarely. When they do happen, pupils are confident that staff will deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils usually attend school regularly. When pupils face barriers to their attendance, leaders put in place support to help them overcome these barriers. Pupils who face challenges that make learning more difficult also receive effective support, which helps to ensure that they make progress.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across all subject areas.
  - Leaders should ensure that the strategies they use to raise attainment are effective at closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment nationally.
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## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Andrew Clark.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, pupils, governors and representatives from the diocese during the inspection. They also spoke with the headteacher of the local authority virtual school along with other representatives from the local authority.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection was 14th March 2024.

The school currently makes use of 6 alternative provisions, all of which are registered.

Headteacher: Paul Dugdale

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### **Lead inspector:**

Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

### **Team inspectors:**

Katy Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Andy Cunningham, His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Brice, 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 19 May 2026

## **School and pupil context**

### **Total pupils**

**821**

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: 1,067

### **School capacity**

**900**

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: 1,154

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**32.28%**

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: 28.9%

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

**2.31%**

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: 3.09%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**10.72%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

### **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

## English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 43.1%       | 45.4%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final) | 35.5%       | 45.9%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | 37.1%       | 45.3%            | Close to average               |

## Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 44.1        | 46.1             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final) | 41.6        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | 41.7        | 46.3             | Close to average               |

## Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | -0.45       | -0.03            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.15       | -0.03            | 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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 31.7%       | 25.8%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final) | 13.2%       | 25.8%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | 21.6%       | 25.2%            | Close to average               |

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 36.6        | 34.9             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final) | 31.2        | 34.6             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | 32.7        | 35.0             | Close to average               |

### Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | -1.11       | -0.57            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.55       | -0.57            | 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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 31.7%       | 53.1%                            | -21.4 pp                |
| 2023/24 (final) | 13.2%       | 53.1%                            | -40.0 pp                |
| 2022/23 (final) | 21.6%       | 52.4%                            | -30.8 pp                |

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024/25 (final) | 36.6        | 50.4                             | -13.8                   |
| 2023/24 (final) | 31.2        | 50.0                             | -18.9                   |

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022/23 (final) | 32.7        | 50.3                             | -17.6                   |

## Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year            | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | -1.11       | 0.16                             | -1.27                   |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.55       | 0.17                             | -0.72                   |

## Destinations after 16

### Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

| Year                   | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023 leavers (revised) | 93%         | 92%              | Average                        |
| 2022 leavers (revised) | 95%         | 93%              | Average                        |
| 2021 leavers (revised) | 91%         | 94%              | Average                        |

## 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) | 10.3%       | 8.4%             | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 9.8%        | 8.9%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 9.0%        | 9.0%             | 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) | 28.4%       | 23.4%            | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 29.1%       | 25.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 26.5%       | 26.5%            | 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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