

St Chad's Catholic Primary School

Address: South Hill, Blackburn Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 8LL

Unique reference number (URN): 119679

Inspection report: 7 July 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 ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders are unwavering in their commitment to secure high rates of attendance for all pupils. They work determinedly to ensure that parents and carers understand the impact that absence has on pupils' learning and wellbeing. Leaders take decisive and effective action to support families who encounter difficulties in attending school. They challenge parents if their children do not attend as regularly as they could. Rates of attendance are consistently well above average. This includes for pupils who face barriers to their attendance.

Leaders have established a highly positive behaviour culture, which permeates all aspects of pupils' school life. They ensure that there are embedded rules that pupils understand. Pupils follow these seamlessly, rarely needing reminders from staff. Pupils articulate that they live up to these expectations because they know the importance of a safe, respectful and positive learning environment. Pupils treat each other and staff with high levels of respect. Disagreements or unkind behaviours are rare. Leaders ensure that, should any bullying or incidents of discrimination occur, including online, these are dealt with effectively in a timely and robust manner. Pupils work hard in lessons and maintain focus. Staff are vigilant at spotting when pupils are struggling to manage their emotions. They swiftly respond to this, providing bespoke support and making thoughtful adjustments that help these pupils.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils broadly achieve well. This is evident in the work they produce in lessons and in their outcomes in national tests, which are typically in line with national averages. Leaders ensure that pupils learn the important skills they need to be successful in later learning. For example, pupils typically become fluent in reading and in carrying out calculations in mathematics. In writing, pupils develop accuracy in their spelling and learn to form letters correctly. Pupils who face barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. Pupils learn a broad body of knowledge, including in subjects beyond English and mathematics. They generally demonstrate that they understand what they have been taught. However, in some other subjects, they do not develop a detailed knowledge and are not clear how key concepts in their learning link together. This hinders some pupils from achieving the depth of understanding they should.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

Leaders have designed an engaging curriculum that, in the main, sets out what pupils should learn at each stage of their education. Leaders are vigilant at checking that, in mixed-age classes, the curriculum builds in a logical order. However, in some subjects, there is

less precision about what pupils should know and how connections are made with pupils' prior learning. Leaders and staff have high aspirations for pupils. This includes those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who struggle in their learning for other reasons. Staff adjust their teaching and provide explicit support for these pupils. This enables them to learn the curriculum successfully.

Staff teach the curriculum well and as intended. Teachers design lessons that immerse pupils in first-hand experiences and provide them with opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts. They ensure pupils secure the skills they need in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Staff check on pupils' levels of understanding. They use this to influence their decisions about what to teach next. In some lessons, teachers do not use this information as effectively as they could to shape their teaching. This means that in some subjects, pupils' misconceptions are not addressed as swiftly as they could be and opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge are not identified.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders make carefully considered decisions about the design and delivery of the curriculum for Reception-age children. This allows them to be prepared well for Year 1. Leaders ensure that, within the mixed-age class, children in the early years secure the knowledge and skills they need across all areas of learning. Staff ensure that children's personal and emotional needs are met. They build positive relationships which help children to feel happy, confident and safe at school.

Staff deliver the early years curriculum well. They support children's language development through the quality interactions they have with them. Children build their independence and confidence to apply their learning in both adult- and child-initiated activities. Staff enrich the curriculum with experiences that bring their learning to life. For example, children demonstrate a broad knowledge of animals that live in water. They make links with what they find out in books and their visit to an aquarium. Children achieve well in the early years. They use their knowledge of phonics to read and spell words independently and with confidence. Staff provide effective support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other challenges. They reduce any barriers these children have in accessing the curriculum. This helps to ensure that all pupils successfully develop the knowledge and skills they need.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders maintain a clear understanding of pupils' needs. They use a range of strategies to identify any barriers that pupils face to their learning and wellbeing. Leaders and staff undertake professional development that specifically focuses on building their expertise in how to assess the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are proactive at engaging with parents and carers, as well as other professionals, to ensure that any changes in pupils' needs are spotted swiftly.

Leaders and staff carefully consider pupils' individual needs when making decisions about what support would be most helpful to them. This includes making sure that any additional funding is spent on resources, activities or strategies to help pupils. Staff ensure that pupils have access to specific resources and assistive technology to reduce barriers to their

learning. They also make adaptations to their lesson delivery and provide focused teaching to ensure pupils make progress from their starting points. This enables pupils, including those who struggle with aspects of their learning, to achieve well. Leaders provide effective pastoral support that ensures pupils' personal needs are met well. This support makes a positive difference in helping pupils to overcome the emotional challenges that they face in their lives.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors have a shared, ambitious vision for the school. They keep this at the heart of all decisions they make. Leaders have clear oversight about the quality of the school. They accurately identify aspects of the school that could be strengthened further and take effective action to achieve this.

Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They bring to their roles a range of important skills that help them to carry out their roles effectively. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities. They provide effective support and challenge to leaders across all aspects of the school's work. Governors, along with leaders, are particularly vigilant about ensuring the wellbeing of staff and checking on their workload.

Leaders proactively seek opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and expertise. For example, they enable staff to work closely with specialists to develop their understanding of how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff collaborate with staff and leaders in other schools, sharing good practice. Leaders carefully consider the priorities of the school when making decisions about professional development for staff.

Leaders engage with parents and carers and local services to ensure that the school remains at the heart of the community. They work in partnership with parents and specialist professionals to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a comprehensive personal development programme that is carefully informed by the needs of the pupils. It includes tailored pastoral help for pupils that supports their emotional wellbeing. Staff teach pupils about fundamental British values. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of these and how they relate to their own lives and to the school's values. Pupils learn about human rights and demonstrate a mature understanding of the importance of equality. Pupils celebrate diversity and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is a real strength of the school.

Pupils learn how to build and maintain positive friendships through the school's relationships education. They know how to recognise risks to their health and wellbeing. For example, pupils are taught about the concept of peer pressure, and they learn strategies about how to manage this. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including road, water and fire safety and how to stay safe online.

Pupils have the opportunity to take on a range of leadership responsibilities. This includes on the school council and eco-council, and through supporting younger pupils. Within these

roles, pupils take actions to make a positive impact on the school and its pupils and on the wider world. For example, pupils designed signs to encourage people to consider the impact on the environment when using electricity in school.

Leaders and staff enrich the curriculum with a wide range of experiences. These foster pupils' curiosity and confidence, as well as broadening their wider knowledge of the world. For example, pupils took part in their own debate following a visit to parliament, where they had the chance to observe this process in action. Staff are vigilant at identifying and fostering pupils' talents. Pupils have opportunities to perform in front of large audiences, learn musical instruments and showcase their skills through external sporting events. Leaders make adaptations to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in these opportunities and experiences.

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

Pupils enjoy attending St Chad's. They develop a thirst for learning, reflected in their high rates of attendance. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects and achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to their learning. Pupils who find learning more difficult are supported well in lessons and through targeted learning programmes. They quickly gain the knowledge they need to close gaps in their learning and to keep up with the curriculum. Older pupils consistently say that they feel academically and emotionally ready for secondary school and for life beyond school. They demonstrate this through the confidence they show in their learning and in their social skills.

The school's vision and Catholic ethos permeate through all aspects of school life. Pupils benefit from learning in an inclusive and caring environment where incidents of discrimination or bullying are rare. However, leaders are vigilant to spotting any early signs of these, and they act quickly and effectively. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. In all parts of the school, the atmosphere is consistently focused, calm and purposeful. This enables pupils to get the most out of their lessons, social times and other experiences that the school offers. Pupils get along together very well. They readily seek to help each other. Older pupils act as role models for younger children. Pupils build positive relationships with staff. They are confident to use the 'ask it basket' to let staff know about any worries they have. This helps them to feel safe.

Pupils access a range of extra-curricular activities that promote their interests and talents. They participate in outdoor learning activities that develop their creativity and problem-solving skills. Pupils attend clubs such as dance, choir, computing and martial arts. Pupils also learn to play musical instruments. Leaders monitor participation across these activities to ensure there is equity of access for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects, the curriculum precisely identifies what pupils should learn and in what order so that pupils gain a deeper and more detailed knowledge across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should strengthen staff's expertise in using assessment strategies effectively within lessons to shape their teaching so that misconceptions are swiftly addressed and opportunities are identified to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Keith Rollins.

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, staff, governors and representatives of the local authority and the diocese during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers and children.

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 December 2024.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: John Riley

Lead inspector:

Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Peter Berry, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.



The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

138

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

157

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)

1.45%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

3.62%

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

10.14%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	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	80%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Above

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	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	80%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	95%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	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		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
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		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25		63%	
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
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		59%	
2024/25		59%	
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
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		60%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
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		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
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		78%	
2024/25		78%	
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
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		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
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)	2.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.1%	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 (3 term)	1.7%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	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.

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