

St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Address: Ribble Drive, Whitefield, Manchester, Lancashire, M45 8NJ

Unique reference number (URN): 149679

Inspection report: 20 January 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 school provides a very well-considered personal development programme. It enables pupils to flourish both academically and in their life beyond school. Pupils respect the different values, beliefs and backgrounds of others. They engage thoughtfully with pertinent issues, such as current affairs. Pupils develop cooperation and conflict resolution skills, and they understand how to manage themselves in different situations. Pupils participate enthusiastically in creative, artistic and cultural opportunities, including performances and community projects. They focus on being active members of their community using kind words and thoughtful actions. For example, pupils deliver plant pots and seeds for local residents to grow. This helps to support their own and others' wellbeing.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is carefully designed. At the right times, pupils learn about healthy relationships, puberty and personal safety, including how to keep themselves safe online. They develop sensible strategies for managing their emotions. Leaders ensure that pupils learn practical life skills, such as making informed decisions about saving and spending money.

Leaders determinedly prioritise access to enrichment for disadvantaged pupils. They remove barriers by adjusting club timings, working with parents and reducing financial pressures. As a result, pupils from all backgrounds participate widely in extra-curricular activities that nurture their interests and talents. Tailored pastoral support helps pupils with their mental health. Leaders seek expert input if it is needed.

Pupils speak positively about trusted adults. They understand how the fundamental British values shape expectations and behaviour in modern Britain. Pupils discuss their future aspirations with excitement and confidence.

The school's inclusive and ambitious approach equips pupils with many qualities that will benefit them, such as determination, accountability and generosity. It helps them develop a clear sense of belonging. Together, these qualities prepare pupils well for life beyond school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Leaders ensure that pupils have a solid foundation in reading, writing and number. If pupils have gaps in this knowledge, they usually catch up quickly.

Most pupils achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Published outcomes show that the majority of pupils meet the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who do not achieve in line with national standards often make clear progress from their starting points.

Disadvantaged pupils and, in many cases, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils typically exceed those of similar pupils nationally. Leaders act promptly to address areas for improvement, including refining the school's approach to reading. This is already improving pupils' achievement.

Pupils' work reflects the knowledge and skills that they gain across the curriculum. They speak confidently about their learning. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education and future pathways.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders consistently implement a clear attendance policy. This helps them to promote regular attendance and challenge absence effectively. As a result, the school's overall attendance typically sits in line with the national average. Pupils show positive attitudes towards coming to school. Celebrations of positive attendance help pupils to value being in school and understand the importance of their education. Leaders monitor attendance patterns closely and identify any trends in absence. Leaders make appropriate adjustments so that pupils can attend school regularly. They work directly with families and external agencies to reduce persistent absence. This targeted work secures improvement.

Leaders have established a calm, orderly and positive environment in which pupils feel safe and well supported. Pupils move around the school sensibly. They are kind, caring and respectful towards others. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently, and pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Low-level disruption occurs very rarely. When it does, staff address it promptly. Bullying is very rare, and pupils trust adults to deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are diligent, remain motivated and take pride in their work. If pupils should struggle, staff use their knowledge of pupils' individual needs to help them back towards positive habits.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum. They make informed decisions to improve teaching where necessary. Leaders prioritise learning of the basics so that pupils secure essential knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional support helps pupils who need to catch up, meaning that most pupils acquire the knowledge and skills that they need for their next steps. Pupils confidently draw on a rich vocabulary to explain their learning.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum that identifies the key knowledge that pupils will learn. In the main, teachers know what to teach and when. Leaders ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge that they need so that the curriculum is typically taught well. Teachers check pupils' learning and usually address any gaps in their understanding. However, on occasion, the activities that teachers select do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen or apply their learning.

Leaders and staff know pupils' needs well. They have high expectations of pupils. Where needed, staff make helpful adaptations, which enable pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities to access the full curriculum. As a result, many pupils make secure progress from typically low starting points.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known or previously known to children's social care. Leaders use this information to tailor support that reduces barriers to learning and helps pupils to feel fully included in school life. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils' individual needs and show kindness and care for their wellbeing.

Leaders have implemented effective systems that allow them to understand the challenges that pupils and families face. They respond to these needs promptly and compassionately. Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They make sure that staff have the requisite knowledge to ensure that pupils receive the appropriate support and adjustments they need to access the full curriculum. Leaders guide teachers in making suitable adaptations to best support pupils with potential barriers to learning.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and evaluate the impact of interventions. They ensure that support remains well matched to pupils' needs, for example, through the carefully allocated funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use alternative provision effectively when needed. They draw on specialist advice, including from the local authority, to inform and further enhance support for pupils who may face barriers to their learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant staffing changes, including in leadership. Leaders have a well-developed understanding of the school's context, its strengths and the areas that require further development. They prioritise the right actions to sustain effective practice or to bring about improvement. Leaders' decisions centre on what is best for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other challenges in their lives. Leaders demonstrate professionalism and high expectations. This creates a culture in which staff are proactive, and pupils benefit from ongoing refinements.

Leaders ensure that staff access high-quality professional development that supports the school's priorities, such as training on subject leadership. The impact of this training is visible in classroom practice. Subject leaders receive focused guidance that helps them to build expertise and lead their areas with increasing assurance. Leaders also provide time for staff to work collaboratively within school.

Staff are well supported. They appreciate that leaders consider their workload and wellbeing carefully when making decisions. Leaders minimise unnecessary demands and ensure that staff work in a supportive and positive environment.

Members of the board of trustees and the local governing board fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors work closely with leaders to understand the school's priorities.

Board members use their knowledge to offer both challenge and support. Leaders are held to account for the impact of their decisions, including how resources are used.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention 

The early years curriculum is well established. It sets out clear progression from Nursery to Reception and supports children's development across the different areas of learning. However, inconsistencies in how the curriculum is delivered limit its impact on children's learning. Staff interactions with children vary in quality. This means that some children benefit from purposeful dialogue, while others do not receive the support that they need to develop important vocabulary. Teacher-led sessions help children to learn new knowledge. For example, phonics teaching has a positive impact on helping children learn to read. However, this rigour is not sustained when children move into independent activities. Some activities are not well matched to the children's stage of development. As a result, some children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not experience the precise learning that leaders expect.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to strengthen provision in the early years, but it is too early to see the full impact of this work. Partnerships with parents and carers are positive. Leaders seek external support when needed. While children gain some of the foundations of learning needed for Year 1, variability in practice means some children are not as well prepared as leaders intend.

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

Pupils are extremely proud to attend this warm, welcoming school. Pupils' attendance rates reflect their eagerness to come to school. They are keen learners who enjoy being immersed in school life. Pupils develop a secure sense of belonging. They feel safe and happy because staff support and care for them well.

Across the school, including in the early years, pupils are confident and charismatic. They are keen to share what they love about their school with visitors. Pupils listen politely and show kindness and respect towards others. Bullying is very rare, and pupils feel assured that adults would help them if needed.

Pupils value their education. They show focus and resilience in lessons. Staff know pupils extremely well. With leaders' support, teachers use approaches that help pupils to learn the interesting, relevant curriculum securely. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, are ready for their next stages.

Pupils typically achieve well. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes in national tests. Pupils with SEND and those who face other barriers to learning often outperform their

peers.

Pupils, including those with complex needs, benefit from the wealth of provision that the school has put in place to help them to achieve well academically and in their wider lives. They are encouraged and supported to be active members of their community, for example by delivering Christmas cakes locally. Pupils take pride in holding leadership roles such as digital leaders, eco warriors and reading champions. Year 6 pupils can also be involved in the 'gardeners and seeds' buddy programme to act as role models for children in Reception. These opportunities build pupils' sense of confidence, responsibility and character.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the work that teachers set enables pupils to deepen and apply their learning in all subjects.
 - Leaders should ensure that the activities chosen to support the delivery of the curriculum in the early years continuous provision are well matched to children's learning and development needs.
 - Leaders should further develop staff's expertise so that interactions across the early years provision are of a consistently high quality.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Chris Foley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John McAuley.

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.

The lead inspector also spoke with the chief performance officer for the trust, the senior regional performance officer for the trust, as well as the chair of the board of local governors and members of the local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant change in leadership since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up the role in April 2023.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The school is part of the diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2024.

The school makes use of one alternative provision, which is unregistered.

Headteacher: Trish Grogan

Lead inspector:

Sheena Clark, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sharon Cliff, Ofsted Inspector

Jonny Foster-Carr, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

209

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

236

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)

26.11%

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

3.35%

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

11.48%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above 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		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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		74%	
2024/25 (revised)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23		73%	

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		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	72%	Close to average
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	73%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

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 (revised)	75%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23		44%	

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%	
2024/25 (revised)	75%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

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 (revised)	75%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average
2022/23		58%	

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 (revised)	88%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

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 (revised)	75%	69%	6 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-22 pp
2022/23		66%	

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 (revised)	75%	81%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	73%	80%	-7 pp
2022/23		78%	

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 (revised)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	78%	-23 pp
2022/23		77%	

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 (revised)	88%	81%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	79%	-25 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

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)	5.3%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.7%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.2%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.1%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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