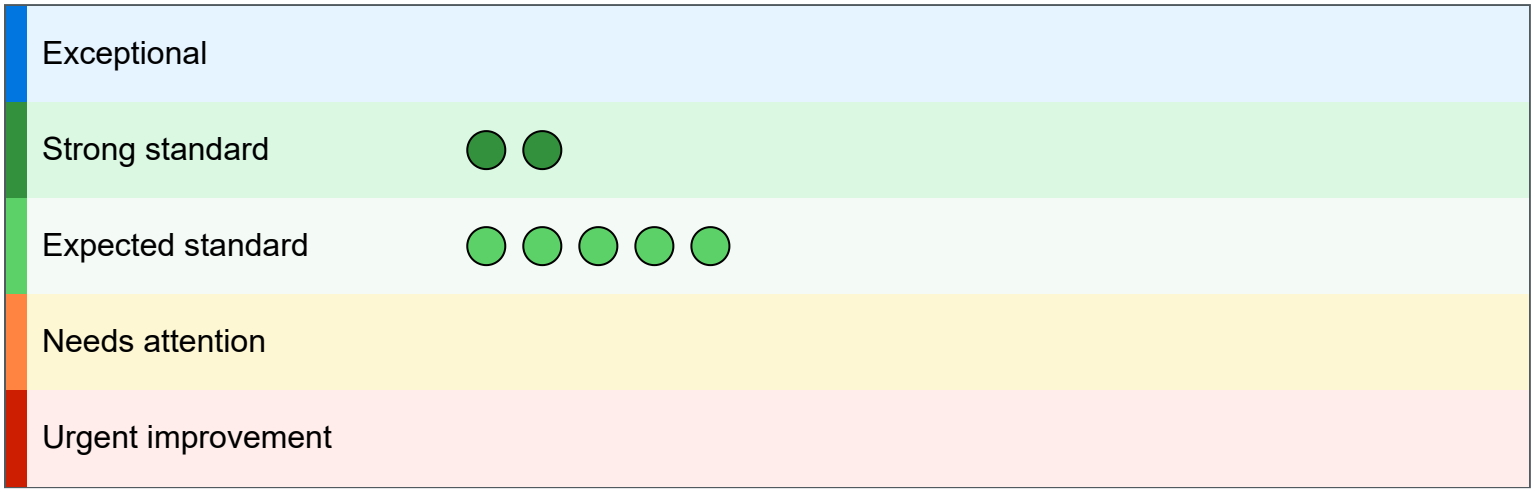
St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

Address: Clare Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 2QW

Unique reference number (URN): 105534

Inspection report: 9 June 2026



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

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have set out a highly effective early years curriculum. Children achieve well and make rapid progress from their starting points. They are prepared very well for Year 1. Staff know exactly what each child needs to learn next in the Nursery and Reception Years.

Leaders prioritise children's language development. High-quality interactions between staff and children run throughout the day, indoors and outdoors. Staff engage children in rich conversations and encourage them to use new vocabulary. They speak with every child each day. Staff give careful attention to disadvantaged children and those who need extra help. As a result, children become confident talkers.

Phonics is taught effectively and gives children the knowledge they need to read and begin to write. Staff teach the programme faithfully and spot gaps in children's knowledge early and close these quickly. Children move securely from learning their first sounds to writing whole sentences. They are well prepared for the reading and writing that Year 1 brings.

Children are happy, safe and settled in the early years. Staff work closely with parents and carers from the start and know each child and family well. Staff share what children are learning and how parents can help at home. This partnership helps children to settle quickly and learn with confidence.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of the school's work. They make sure that every pupil feels valued and takes part fully in school life. Staff identify barriers to learning or wellbeing early and act quickly to reduce them. This begins in the early years, where staff provide planned support that meets children’s needs.

Staff are well trained to adapt their teaching so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn alongside their peers. In each classroom, staff provide support when it is needed, for example through 'enable stations' that help pupils to work independently. Staff use adaptations consistently and help pupils feel confident and engaged.

When pupils need more support, leaders work with external specialists, such as speech and language therapists, to shape effective provision. They use recommendations from education, health and care plans and check with parents and carers that support is working.

Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They review its impact and adjust provision, so pupils make rapid progress. Leaders also support pupils known to social care and respond effectively to the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, staff reduce barriers to learning and ensure that pupils across groups learn the same curriculum and achieve well.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils make secure progress from their starting points, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They develop knowledge in early reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils write at length in a range of styles and explain their learning clearly across different subjects.

Published results in the previous year were lower than is typical for the school. Leaders identified the reasons for this and took appropriate action to improve pupils' attainment. Many pupils now achieve in line with national expectations, including in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Disadvantaged pupils do not yet achieve as well as their peers, particularly in reading. Leaders have recognised this and are providing targeted support. This is beginning to improve how well these pupils are learning. Most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders encourage pupils to attend school as often as they can. They keep a close eye on attendance so that they can step in early when a pupil needs help. Where attendance has been lower, including for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, leaders give timely support. They work closely with parents and carers to remove the barriers that get in the way of pupils coming to school. As a result, overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

Leaders make sure that staff and pupils understand and follow the school's high expectations for behaviour. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They come into lessons ready to learn. Disruption is very rare. Pupils behave well throughout the day. They enjoy breaktimes and lunchtimes, play happily together and include others. Leaders support pupils who find it hard to manage their feelings or behaviour, including those with SEND. Pupils learn how to put things right when they fall out or when problems arise. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff deal with concerns quickly and effectively. The school does not tolerate discrimination or unkind behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have structured it logically from the early years to Year 6 so that pupils build knowledge in a clear and coherent order across subjects. Leaders ensure that pupils secure important knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics over time. Where pupils struggle with their learning, staff provide timely support to help them keep up.

Teachers build on what pupils already know and sequence learning so that new knowledge connects securely over time. This helps pupils to remember more and apply their learning in different subjects. Staff deliver the phonics programme well in early years and key stage 1. They model sounds accurately and provide books closely matched to pupils' reading ability.

Leaders have introduced a consistent approach to handwriting and pupils' work shows clear improvement.

Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully and use this information to shape what they teach next. They adapt lessons so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged learn alongside their peers.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of education and provide relevant training for staff. A small number of recent curriculum developments are still embedding and are not yet fully reflected in pupils' achievement.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have managed significant change effectively. They understand the school's context and community well. They want pupils to be included and to thrive. They have identified the right priorities to continue this work. Leaders look outward and learn from others, including other schools, the local authority and the diocese. This openness strengthens the school.

Governors know the school and its community well. They share leaders' high expectations of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors understand their role, including their responsibilities for safeguarding. They have an accurate view of where the school needs to improve, particularly in pupils' achievement and teaching.

Leaders care for their staff. They consider workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Training is well planned and supports what the school needs as well as staff at different stages of their careers. Leaders mentor newer teachers effectively and their teaching improves as a result. Staff understand the school's strengths and priorities, which helps them feel part of its improvement. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school and describe it as caring, welcoming and rooted in its community. However, some systems that leaders and governors use to check the school's work are not fully developed. As a result, they do not always understand the full impact of their actions. Leaders recognise this and are working to improve it.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils experience this through a well-designed personal, social, health and economic education programme and through the wider life of the school. The programme is rooted in the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils develop the personal qualities and language they need to manage their feelings.

Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. Teachers show pupils how to stay safe in the local area, including near the railway line close to the school. Pupils learn about relationships and health in ways that suit their age as they move through the school. They learn strategies to look after their mental health. Staff share these with families so learning continues at home. Where pupils need more help with their wellbeing, leaders provide support such as play therapy and counselling. The school is a caring place

where pupils know everyone is valued. They love school and can name trusted adults they would turn to if they needed help.

Pupils take on a wide range of leadership roles and these carry genuine influence. For example, the learning council has shaped leaders' work to improve pupils' spoken language. Each Year 6 pupil holds a responsibility and takes it seriously. Pupils enjoy rich experiences, including visits to an art gallery, a museum and the beach. Music is a lively part of school life. Pupils learn to play instruments such as drums and guitar and perform with growing confidence. They join clubs in sport and the arts. There are frequent opportunities for outdoor learning. These experiences reach pupils who might otherwise miss out and ensure that all pupils are included.

However, pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values lacks detail. Leaders have strengthened this part of the curriculum, but this work is recent and its impact is not yet evident in what pupils know.

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

Pupils are proud to attend this happy and inclusive school. They are greeted warmly each day by staff who know them well. Pupils say the school is like a second family where they feel valued and cared for. They build positive friendships quickly. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously and look out for younger pupils throughout the day. Pupils of different ages play and learn happily together. The school's Catholic ethos underpins this warm and welcoming culture and helps pupils to show respect and kindness to others.

Pupils feel safe in school. They move around calmly and understand the school's clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils behave well, are polite and considerate and treat each other with kindness. Bullying is rare and staff deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive ready to start the day.

Pupils enjoy their learning and try hard in lessons. They concentrate well and are keen to succeed. Teachers help them build on what they already know and pupils are proud of their work. Educational visits, music and sport bring learning to life and help pupils remember important knowledge. Children in the early years settle quickly and grow in confidence because of the high-quality care they receive.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom, including trips, outdoor learning and leadership roles. They take pride in these experiences and develop confidence and responsibility. Staff make sure all pupils can take part. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn well because teaching supports their needs effectively. Pupils who need extra help receive it promptly. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed the recent changes to the curriculum so that teaching is consistently effective across the school and pupils build secure knowledge.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should develop their systems for checking the school's work so that they can judge the impact of their actions more precisely.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sean Brennan.

The school is part of a federation with St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School.

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 co-headteachers and other school leaders, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents and carers during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke to the school's local authority school improvement adviser.

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection was March 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, two new co-headteachers and assistant headteachers have been appointed.

Co-headteachers: Joanne O'Mullane and Tracey Collins

Lead inspector:
Dianne Holcroft, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Nicky Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector
John Coxhead, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

371
Above 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

446
Above 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)

21.78%
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

7.28%
Well above 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

21.56%
Well above 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 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	52%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	38%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	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	64%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	58%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	73%	Below

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	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	76%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	71%	Close to average

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	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	50%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	83%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	62%	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 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	34%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	22%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	42%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	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	51%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	44%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	55%	60%	Close to average

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	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	44%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55%	58%	Close to average

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	51%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	39%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	75%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	45%	59%	Below

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	34%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	22%	69%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	42%	67%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-21 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	51%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	81%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	58%	80%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	78%	-24 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	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	44%	78%	-34 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	77%	-23 pp

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	51%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	39%	81%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	79%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	79%	-34 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 (3 term)	4.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	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 (3 term)	11.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	18.2%	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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