

St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

Address: Tarbock Road, Speke, Liverpool, Merseyside, L24 0SN

Unique reference number (URN): 133615

Inspection report: 12 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils' attainment has improved in recent years, which is a reflection of leaders' and pupils' hard work. Many pupils in this community face barriers to learning. At the end of key stage 2, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are close to national averages.

Across the school, pupils are building their knowledge and skills. Pupils edit and improve their written work with skill and purpose. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a strength. In reading, disadvantaged pupils perform above disadvantaged pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress from their starting points and are well supported to access the full curriculum.

Phonics outcomes and multiplication tables scores remain below national averages, and some pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps as they should be. Leaders' actions are beginning to have an impact, though outcomes do not reflect this fully.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have built a coherent and ambitious curriculum that prioritises secure foundations in reading and mathematics. It helps pupils to develop rich vocabulary and draws on what pupils already know. The curriculum is broad and carefully planned across subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are well supported in accessing the curriculum.

In most lessons, teaching is engaging and effective. Teachers bring learning to life and help pupils to build and use what they know. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and talk about their work with growing confidence. In an active science lesson, pupils eagerly recalled the life cycle of a frog. They used precise vocabulary to describe the dramatic transformation from egg to adult frog.

Sometimes, pupils' misunderstandings are not spotted quickly enough. Without prompt correction, pupils at times practise and repeat errors. Similarly, where pupils have missed learning, they do not always receive the help they need to get back on track. Leaders have an accurate understanding of where teaching needs strengthening and target staff training accordingly. They have also identified phonics and pupils' fluency with multiplication tables as priorities and have taken decisive steps to address these. Leaders' actions are beginning to improve inconsistencies in teaching.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear vision for giving children the best possible start. Since the last inspection, they have developed a curriculum that effectively builds children's early language, communication and number skills. Leaders have created a new outdoor learning space to enrich children's outdoor experiences. Children, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive extra help.

Staff identify needs promptly. As a result, these children make secure progress in their language and early number skills from their starting points.

Children settle quickly into a caring and welcoming Nursery where adults have high expectations of them. Children are happy and confident, and they learn well through play. As children explore an airport role-play area, staff model rich language. Children use new words with growing confidence.

In Reception, learning to read is prioritised. Staff follow the chosen phonics programme and make careful checks to find out what children know and can do. They are developing their use of questioning to extend children's thinking further. Children have a wide range of books to take home. Leaders encourage families to read together at home. Children build secure early reading, language and number knowledge and are ready for the next stage. Most children are well prepared for Year 1. Leaders build close relationships with parents and carers right from the start.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have a precise understanding of the barriers that different groups of pupils face. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care are identified early and acted upon. This includes pupils whose needs are complex and overlapping.

Leaders use pupil premium funding carefully to reduce barriers and broaden pupils' experiences. Specialist support, including sensory, speech and language, and mental health services, extends what the school can offer. Leaders work closely with the local authority's virtual school to support pupils who are looked after. Staff are well equipped to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. As a result, pupils with SEND make secure progress from their starting points. They are well supported to access the full curriculum. Where alternative provision is used, it is in pupils' best interests and has a meaningful impact on their progress.

From the early years, staff develop pupils' ability to manage their emotions and access their learning. Pupils with complex or interrupted educational histories settle quickly and make secure progress from their starting points. Pupil and parent voice shapes support at every stage. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are equally well understood and carefully supported.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They explain the thinking behind their decisions clearly and show this is making a difference over time. Leaders are taking action to improve attendance and increase consistency in teaching. Leaders check the quality of teaching and provide support where it is needed. This is beginning to improve consistency across the school.

Leaders consider staff's workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Staff feel proud and valued as a result. They invest in training, learn from each other and benefit from support from outside school. This means pupils benefit from staff who know them well.

Leaders keep governors well informed. Governors hold leaders to account with appropriate challenge and support, including for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They meet their statutory duties and maintain a clear oversight of safeguarding. The diocese and local authority both maintain meaningful relationships with the school. Working together, they ensure decisions are made in the best interests of pupils and the community.

Leaders know their community well and act in pupils' best interests. They engage actively with partners, including police and early help services. Leaders communicate regularly with parents and carers and value their views. They work closely with families to connect them with wider support. This shows the school understands its role at the heart of the community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils thrive as individuals and as active members of their school community. The school's Catholic ethos shapes how pupils treat one another. Pupils and staff say the school feels like a family.

Through a carefully designed personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The programme is shaped deliberately around the risks pupils face in their locality, including gang culture and online harm. Pupils are better equipped to recognise and resist these risks as a result. Older pupils have practised, through role play, how to respond safely to inappropriate online requests. They know what to do and who to tell. Pupils speak with confidence about healthy relationships and the changes they will experience as they grow.

Pupils understand and apply British values confidently. Community police work with pupils on the rule of law and their responsibilities as citizens. Pupils describe the significance of Rosa Parks and speak clearly about discrimination and why it causes harm. They can name faiths beyond Christianity, though their knowledge of specific beliefs and practices is still developing.

Leaders make sure that no pupil misses out on the school's wide enrichment offer. Clubs are free of charge, financial support is available and the school minibus removes transport barriers. This means disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy the full offer. This includes residentials, trips and skiing in the Alps.

Pupils feel safe and well supported. Specialist support for emotional wellbeing is available when needed. This means pupils get the right help at the right time. Staff know their pupils well and respond sensitively to those who need a gentle start to the day. Leaders work closely with families so that care reaches well beyond the school gates.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they could. This means that they miss important learning and make less progress than their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are among those most affected. Leaders work closely with families to understand why some pupils are absent. They involve external agencies so that families receive the right support. Leaders also address practical barriers, such as transport, so that pupils can get to school. Some pupils who used to miss school frequently are now attending more often. However, overall attendance remains below national levels. Leaders are taking further steps to bring about the improvement that pupils need.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful to their peers and to staff. The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Staff apply rewards and sanctions consistently so that pupils understand what is expected of them. This means that most pupils are ready to learn when they come to school. Pupils take part fully in lessons. They respond well to the tasks that teachers set. Bullying or any discriminatory behaviour is rare and not tolerated. When incidents do occur, leaders act quickly. Pupils feel safe and well supported.

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

Kind words and familiar faces welcome every pupil to this school each morning. This reflects the school's Catholic values of caring, learning and inspiring. Pupils feel safe, valued and known as individuals. Staff hold high aspirations for every pupil, whatever challenges they face. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. This aids their learning and helps them thrive. Pupils are proud to belong here.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Even so, gaps remain. Phonics outcomes are below national expectations and pupils do not recall multiplication tables with sufficient fluency. The school is working to address these gaps so that pupils build the secure knowledge they need.

Pupils behave well. Relationships across the school are nurturing and staff respond to difficulties with care and consistency. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, it is dealt with quickly. Pupils know which adults in school they can speak to if they are worried. They say they feel safe.

Too many pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, miss too much school. This affects their learning and their chance to enjoy everything the school has to offer.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of enriching activities and experiences. Leaders make sure that no pupil misses out, with support in place for the cost of taking part. Pupils take on meaningful leadership roles, including as prayer leaders and school councillors. These opportunities reflect the school's Catholic character and help pupils grow in confidence and responsibility.

From the moment children start in Nursery, learning to communicate and read is a priority. Staff develop children's vocabulary with skill and purpose. In Reception, children learn to read through a structured phonics programme. They speak about their learning with confidence. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop their work with external agencies so that barriers to attendance translate into sustained reductions in absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent.
 - Leaders should strengthen the teaching of phonics and multiplication tables so that all pupils develop important foundational knowledge and achieve outcomes that reach national averages.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and address gaps in learning promptly, including those arising from absence.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rita Byrne.

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, other senior leaders and staff. They also met with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection was in June 2019.

The school currently uses one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nicola Harrop

Lead inspector:

Dianne Holcroft, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Valmai Roberts, Ofsted Inspector

Jackie Stillings, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

392

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

420

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)

51.40%

Well above 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

3.83%

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

13.01%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	44%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	35%	60%	Below

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	58%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	69%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	48%	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	57%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	71%	Below

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	60%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	53%	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	42%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32%	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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	49%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42%	58%	Below

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	54%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
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	42%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	69%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	32%	66%	-34 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	57%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	70%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	80%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	78%	-33 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	49%	78%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	42%	77%	-35 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	54%	80%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	65%	81%	-16 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
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)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.7%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	21.9%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.4%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	23.4%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

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

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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