

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Osbaldeston

Address: Longsight Road, Osbaldeston, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 7HX

Unique reference number (URN): 119647

Inspection report: 30 June 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 

Overall, pupils achieve well and are generally prepared for the next stage of learning. Published Year 6 national test data show attainment is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points. Leaders quickly identified the reasons for below-average attainment in the 2025 Year 4 multiplication check, including the impact of small pupil numbers. They have acted effectively to identify and address gaps in mathematical knowledge.

Pupils develop knowledge across the wider curriculum and generally remember what they have learned. This helps them to make meaningful connections between subjects. Increasingly, pupils secure the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge they need and use it accurately. However, some pupils have gaps in learning, particularly in handwriting skills and times-table knowledge. These weaknesses sometimes limit pupils' ability to write at length and tackle more complex mathematical problems as they progress through the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy being part of the St Mary's community. They attend school regularly and on time. Over the last 3 years, attendance rates have been above the national average for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Persistent absence is low. When pupils face barriers to regular attendance, leaders work closely with families and external agencies to support improvement. This includes access to the school breakfast club. Pupils encourage one another to achieve the weekly class attendance and punctuality trophy.

Leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour are understood by pupils and staff. Their work to establish a shared understanding of behaviour strategies and approaches is evident across the school. This begins in the early years, where children learn to take turns, play cooperatively and respect their learning environment. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves well around the school buildings and grounds. Pupils who find managing their behaviour more challenging receive tailored, specialist support. Carefully considered strategies help them take responsibility for their actions. When pupils make mistakes, staff help them to reflect and learn from them. Incidents of unkind behaviour or bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a well-informed understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught. They closely check the impact that the curriculum is having on pupils' achievement and they make well-founded decisions about the aspects that need further work. Staff have secure subject knowledge. There is a common approach to teaching the curriculum, which is generally effective.

Recently, leaders have further developed the focus on pupils' core knowledge. They have introduced new curriculums in phonics and writing, including handwriting. These new programmes, coupled with high-quality training for staff, has improved the teaching of reading and writing. Staff identify when pupils are struggling with gaining these basic skills. Those pupils who need further support with reading receive targeted catch-up teaching. This helps pupils to read with more fluency. However, the gaps that some pupils have in their writing and times-tables knowledge are not addressed as quickly.

Leaders' work to support pupils to overcome barriers to learning is generally successful. When required, individualised support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Across key stages 1 and 2, staff generally adapt learning well. They use visual resources and a range of learning tools that support pupils to access the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years make a successful start to their education. Leaders have prioritised the early years provision and learning environment. As a result, indoor and outdoor areas are carefully designed and support children's learning well.

Children develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Leaders consider children's starting points when designing the curriculum. Developing language and emotional skills is a priority. Staff use rhymes, songs and interactions to extend children's vocabulary and communication. These approaches help children develop confidence when speaking and listening. The phonics curriculum strengthens this work further. Children learn new sounds and apply them confidently in their writing. Rainbow challenges provide opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to develop their knowledge independently. The curriculum encourages curiosity. For example, children were inspired by the story 'Supertato' and designed traps to capture the evil pea. By the end of the Reception Year, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

Staff know children well. Support for those facing barriers to their learning or wellbeing is closely matched to need. Relationships with parents and carers are established from the outset. 'Stay and play' sessions encourage parents' involvement in learning. These relationships help children to feel secure and develop a sense of belonging at the start of their school journey.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff seek to understand pupils' individual circumstances, particularly those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have established systems to identify, assess and meet pupils' needs quickly and accurately. However, at times, there is a lack of shared understanding of these processes among leaders, staff, parents and carers. As a result, the identification of some pupils' needs, and the subsequent support, is not as cohesive as it could be.

Overall, pupils receive the support that they need to overcome barriers to their learning and wellbeing. This starts in the early years, where staff receive specialist training in early communication. As a result, children settle quickly and access the curriculum successfully from the outset.

Leaders work well with external professionals and organisations to meet pupils' needs. Leaders, including governors, also ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium funding, is used appropriately. This strengthens the academic and wider enrichment opportunities available to disadvantaged pupils. It has a positive impact on their experiences in school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including governors, have navigated a period of considerable change. During this time, leaders have kept pupils' best interests at the centre of decision-making and maintained positive and productive relationships with parents and carers.

Leaders pay close attention to staff's wellbeing and workload. They have been careful not to increase workload unnecessarily as changes have been implemented. Staff value this approach, and they are supportive of leaders' actions. Staff also appreciate the wide range of training available to them. This includes networks, partnerships and work with external agencies, including the local authority. This strengthens the work of the school.

Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have made well-considered decisions to improve the curriculum and its implementation. As a result, pupils' learning experiences continue to improve. Leaders prioritise meeting the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Governors are invested in the school. They have an in-depth understanding of the community it serves. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively, including oversight of safeguarding arrangements. However, at times, governors do not apply sufficient scrutiny to all aspects of the school's work. As a result, their ability to provide leaders with consistent and purposeful challenge at times is limited.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders are committed to preparing pupils for life beyond Osbaldeston. The personal, social, health and economic education programme equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for the future. For example, pupils learn essential first-aid skills from Year 2 onwards. They understand how to keep themselves and others safe in the community and online. Work with national charities helps pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships in sensitive ways. Pupils speak confidently about the difference between good and bad secrets. Leaders place a strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles. They provide opportunities to take part in sport. For example, every key stage 2 pupil has represented the school in a sporting competition. The mental-health curriculum teaches pupils strategies for maintaining their wellbeing. 'Happiness heroes' and 'wellbeing warriors' are elected by their peers to support others during social times. They act as ambassadors for healthy minds and bodies.

Trusted adults are available to support pupils. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, require tailored support to manage their emotions. Specialist nurture provision is available to help pupils navigate challenges such as

bereavement, friendship difficulties, self-esteem and transition. This enables pupils to overcome life's challenges and thrive.

Pupils are committed to supporting those who are less fortunate. For example, the 100 mile sponsored 'big Lent walk' for CAFOD raised money for a charity important to the school community. The eco-council is dedicated to improving the local environment. Members have developed a garden area and planted flower beds to encourage nature within the school grounds. These opportunities contribute positively to pupils' moral and cultural development.

Pupils develop their understanding of diversity through literature, visitors and the study of faiths and festivals. They understand fundamental British values and their importance in modern Britain.

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

Pupils feel known and valued in this small, welcoming school. They embody the school's values to believe, achieve and flourish. The whole-school buddy programme ensures that every pupil has a trusted friend to turn to for help and advice. Consequently, pupils develop relationships across year groups, which contributes to a sense of belonging to the school community. Pupils know that bullying is rare. When concerns do arise, leaders deal with them quickly. This helps pupils to feel safe. Attendance rates are high.

Jasper, the school's dog, welcomes pupils most mornings and helps them to begin the day positively. From the Nursery and Reception Years, children get off to a strong start. Older pupils take pride in their responsibilities as buddies and act as positive role models to children in the early years. This helps them to learn routines and expectations quickly. They settle well, build trusting relationships with staff and develop confidence.

Pupils endeavour to be nominated as the class 'VIP' during celebration assembly and enjoy a biscuit with the headteacher. Classrooms are engaging environments where pupils feel safe to learn from mistakes. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, benefit from a purposeful curriculum. They achieve well and are suitably prepared for the next stage of education. Pupils with SEND and those facing barriers to their wellbeing receive tailored support. This helps them develop socially and make progress through the curriculum.

Learning is enriched through a range of experiences. Visits to places such as Bolton and Ribchester, together with a residential experience for outdoor adventurous activities, help pupils develop knowledge and skills beyond the classroom. Pupils are keen to contribute to school life through leadership roles, including the Mission Team, which supports pupils' spiritual development in the prayer garden at lunchtimes. Pupils contribute to national charitable causes by organising events such as a coffee morning for parents, carers and the wider community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently address gaps in pupils' handwriting skills and knowledge of times tables so that pupils can achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.
 - Leaders should refine their approach to identifying, assessing and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so there is a common understanding among all leaders, staff, parents and carers.
 - Governors should refine their monitoring so that they have an accurate insight into the school's work and they are able to offer leaders suitable support and challenge.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Ian Nugent.

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 school leaders, including governors, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. The school is voluntary aided and is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection was June 2018.

At the time of the inspection, there were 72 pupils on roll.

The school provides a breakfast and after-school provision for pupils.

The school currently does not make use of alternative provision.

Headteacher: Maria Coulthard

Lead inspector:

Elliot Costas-Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Mark Sherwin, 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 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

73

Well 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

99

Well 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)

6.06%

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

1.37%

Below 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

31.51%

Well above 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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	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	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

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%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	73%	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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	80%	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)	2.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	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)	0.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.9%	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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