

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chipping

Address: Garstang Road, Chipping, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 2QH

Unique reference number (URN): 119643

Inspection report: 9 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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders review the school's information, policies and practice linked to attendance and behaviour carefully. In doing so, leaders draw on their in-depth knowledge of these topics. Through clear messages to staff, pupils and parents and carers, the school ensures that attendance is understood as highly important. The school works with families and the local authority when difficulties arise. Pupils' attendance is a positive picture over time, with attendance rates above average and persistent absence below average. Governors challenge leaders about how the school can achieve even more.

Small past inconsistencies in staff's management of pupils' behaviour have been skilfully identified by leaders and ironed out. The school has introduced a clear, positive approach to behaviour that is already bearing fruit. Typically, pupils' behaviour is respectful, self-controlled and cooperative. They understand that leaders and staff will deal with discrimination or other unacceptable behaviours seriously and effectively. Leaders and staff seek to celebrate pupils' positive behaviours, including how pupils conduct themselves in learning activities. Staff feel well supported in their work to guide pupils with behaviour, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that, in the main, lessons are free from disruption.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

At the heart of the school's approach, leaders ask themselves and staff what each family needs and how they can help each pupil to feel that they belong. Leaders ensure that they and staff consider pupils' individual needs and previous experiences carefully. Leaders take thoughtful actions to remove much of what gets in the way of the growth of pupils' confidence, resilience and educational success. The school bases its use of funding for disadvantaged pupils on educational research so that money is used well to improve pupils' experiences and outcomes. The school's purposeful decisions enable pupils who may face obstacles to their learning and wellbeing to bloom.

Leaders draw competently on their deep understanding of pupils' vulnerabilities and experiences, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that plans and targets for pupils with SEND are well thought out. The school ensures that staff know how to provide a step-by-step approach to support the needs of pupils. Leaders work successfully with parents and carers to inform the school's work. Leaders use funding thoughtfully, such as to secure assistance for pupils from other professionals. This means that, for example, pupils with SEND benefit from well-organised support.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school's leadership is rooted in a deep knowledge of high-quality primary education, special educational needs and/or disabilities, safeguarding and up-to-date educational research. Leaders review the school's work with accuracy. This is matched with an ambition to continue to cultivate the special feel of this village school, as well as connect it effectively

with other schools and communities. Leaders strive to create the conditions that will grow the confidence and skills of all pupils and staff, ready for the opportunities that lie ahead in their lives.

Recently, leaders have made extra sure that safeguarding remains effective, inclusion is understood and prioritised and that attendance and behaviour are carefully considered at the school. Leaders are ambitious and act competently to support staff's teaching skills and knowledge. Leaders make skilful use of advice from external experts to inform improvements at the school. Leaders' work follows a clear and ambitious roadmap, so they take a staged approach to its continued improvement. Staff welcome leaders' focus on enabling their work with pupils to bear fruit.

Leaders consider staff workload in their decisions. They ensure that staff benefit from opportunities to learn from leaders and from one another. This results in effective teamwork and positive working relationships. Staff wellbeing is high.

Governors bring a suitable range of expertise to their roles. They think carefully about the long-term life of the school. Governors keep a suitable check on the school's work and are adequately informed of its successes and priorities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some pupils do not develop the spelling, punctuation, grammar or handwriting skills that they need for the next stage of their education. In some curriculum subjects, some pupils cannot explain aspects of their knowledge in depth. This is because some teaching has not ensured that they think enough about lesson content or take part in learning activities as well as they should.

Over time, pupils' attainment in the subjects that are assessed and reported nationally is positive. Pupils' attainment of the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined is above average. Their attainment in Year 6 in mathematics is above average, as is their attainment in multiplication in Year 4.

Pupils enjoy reading and build their reading and phonics skills reasonably well. They become able to communicate their ideas and understanding with clarity. Pupils' attainment of the expected standard in reading in Year 6 is above average.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The school's curriculum and teaching are generally successful. However, some tasks selected by teachers do not extend pupils' thinking or their participation in lessons as effectively as they could. In each key stage, including the early years, teaching sometimes does not cultivate pupils' basic skills of spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar effectively enough.

Leaders have identified variation in the quality of some teaching carefully and accurately. Leaders support staff, such as by modelling effective teaching strategies to teachers and teaching assistants. Leaders help staff to teach and check on the wide range of pupils' needs in the school's mixed-age classes. The whole staff team is reinvigorated by leaders' ambitious whole-scale curriculum review, linked to up-to-date educational research, which is just beginning.

Staff benefit from leaders' expert guidance, which ensures that teaching is adapted carefully around the needs of pupils, such as those who may face difficulties in their lives. Typically, teachers and other staff make effective adaptations to the teaching and support that they provide, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff skilfully help pupils to know and remember many basic skills in phonics, reading and mathematics. They help pupils to learn important new words in different curriculum subjects.

Early years

Needs attention 

Over time, children in the pre-school and Reception Year, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mostly achieve well. However, by the time that they move to Year 1, some children do not form letters as well as they could.

Leaders work with the local authority to further refine the school's early years curriculum and teaching. Staff build teaching suitably on what children know, understand and can do. The school identifies the important next steps in learning for children, for example in the communication, language and physical and personal skills of 2-year-olds.

The school's work to identify children with SEND begins effectively in the early years, including through links with parents and carers and previous settings. Leaders and staff understand well how to prepare the ground to help pupils with SEND and disadvantaged children to grow in their skills and knowledge.

Staff are caring and gentle with children. Teamwork is another strength of the school's work in the combined pre-school and Reception Year class. Staff use questions well to support children's thinking. They use stories effectively to inspire children about the joys of books and reading. When children are ready, staff begin to teach phonics. The staff team encourages and supports children's learning and wellbeing effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Pupils treat fellow pupils and the wider community with respect. Pupils' own sense of community is strengthened through their attendance at the school's popular breakfast and after-school clubs. Although leaders and staff teach pupils what it means to be a positive member of society, pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is not well developed.

Leaders are determined to introduce pupils to life beyond the school, so they steadily improve this aspect of teachers' work. Leaders and staff take pupils on walks on the local fells to understand the importance of local farming, industry and communities. They help pupils to value the rich wildlife that surrounds Chipping village, such as the hares that bound about on the nearby field. Leaders ensure that pupils learn what it means to live in a modern and diverse society. For example, in the school's well-organised library areas, leaders

provide high-quality books that celebrate difference. Leaders inspire pupils about possible careers. For example, pupils meet with visitors to the school, such as a professional goalkeeper, an anaesthetist and an airline pilot.

In this small school, pupils benefit from many opportunities to look after the school premises and care for other pupils. Weekly opportunities beyond the required curriculum include, for example, pupils from Reception Year to Year 6 learning to swim. Pupils learn other valuable new skills, for instance den-building and how to use woodwork tools through activities in the school's woodland area.

Leaders ensure that staff use a suitable curriculum, such as to develop pupils' understanding of family relationships, personal privacy and healthy eating. They teach pupils about important topics, for example how to stay safe online and keep safe when riding a bicycle on the road. Each pupil is known very well by leaders and staff, which enables the school to act quickly to provide effective pastoral support, for instance for how pupils feel.

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

Pupils feel safe at this school because they know leaders and staff care deeply about them. Whenever a pupil is the slightest bit worried about any aspect of their life, leaders and staff make extra time to listen to them and provide effective support.

Pupils find that leaders and staff think about them as an individual and celebrate their interests and successes. This is a school where pupils can be themselves and feel that they belong. Generally, pupils' behaviour is calm, positive and considerate. Leaders and staff deal quickly and effectively with bullying.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy their learning. They want to be there, and they attend often. Pupils also do not want to miss out on spending time with their many friends. Pupils' learning activities include working with local volunteers to grow fruit and vegetables in the school's well-tended allotment. They do this while studying summertime birds, such as the screaming swifts and twittering swallows that fly overhead around the village.

Generally, pupils at the school attain well in national assessments of their knowledge. However, on occasion, children's achievement is held back by variability in the quality of some teaching. Sometimes, pupils do not learn to think deeply or to play a full part in their learning activities. At times, some children's and pupils' writing skills do not develop effectively enough. Staff help children in the early years to talk with confidence, including about the beautiful scenery of Chipping and nearby Longridge Fell. Pupils who face difficulties in their learning receive skilful extra support from staff, which helps them to achieve well.

Pupils are proud of the school's Catholic character. They learn to have genuine regard for other people, families and communities. Nevertheless, pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is less developed than it could be.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff select and use tasks that develop pupils' thinking and participation in lessons effectively.
 - Leaders should make sure that pupils, including children in the early years, develop their knowledge of the basics of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so they can communicate their ideas and understanding accurately.
 - Leaders should build pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values so they fully understand how these connect to the broader values of their day-to-day lives at the school.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rachel Crisp.

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 and a wide range of staff during the inspection. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke by telephone with representatives of 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. It is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection was in November 2023.

At the time of the inspection, there were 78 pupils on roll, which is a significant increase in pupils since the previous inspection.

The early years class consists of pre-school children, including some 2-year-olds, and the Reception Year.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The headteacher was new to the school in January 2026.

Headteacher: Katie Jones

Lead inspector:

Tim Vaughan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Andrew Marlow, 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 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

46

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

70

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)

17.39%

Below 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

4.35%

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

23.91%

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

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	73%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	62%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	61%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	75%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	74%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	S

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	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	72%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	72%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	71%	S

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	82%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	74%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	73%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	73%	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

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%	
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)	3.9%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.6%	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)	5.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	2.9%	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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright