

# St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Preston

Address: Downing Street, PR1 4RH

Unique reference number (URN): 149317

## Inspection report: 25 November 2025

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 have been relentlessly focused on improving pupils' attendance. While attendance rates are still slightly below the national average, pupils increasingly attend school more often, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, while still above the national average, is significantly reducing. The notable and clear improvements over time are a direct result of leaders' effective efforts. The expectation of regular attendance is a whole-school responsibility. Parents and carers are supported well to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is typically positive and considerate of others. Pupils are joyful about being in school. Staff and leaders model this positivity and adherence to the school's behaviour policy. In lessons, pupils are usually keen to get on with their work and many place high value on their education. Incidents of bullying or discrimination are very rare, and leaders act swiftly to address any issues should they occur. This helps pupils to feel assured that they are respected and valued.

### Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring that pupils' needs are met, both in their learning and in their wider lives. They understand the school's context and are ambitious for the high proportion of pupils who face additional barriers to learning to achieve well. This ambition is reflected in the training that staff undertake to understand and better support pupils' needs, such as autism-support training. Consequently, staff are typically confident and skilled in making sure that adaptations meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Effective systems ensure that staff swiftly identify pupils who require additional support. These systems are embedded across the school to ensure that pupils receive timely intervention. The support provided for pupils is usually effective. Leaders make judicious use of additional funding to shape their work to meet pupils' needs. For example, they ensure that there are no financial barriers to pupils accessing the school's enrichment programme.

Leaders evaluate the impact of their actions with rigour, ensuring that strategies are refined where necessary. When appropriate, leaders draw on external professional expertise to provide tailored support, such as speech and language provision. Leaders and staff are well trained to recognise and support any additional needs that pupils may have. As a result, pupils receive help that is both targeted and impactful.

### Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Following a period of significant change in leadership, leaders have rightly prioritised the aspects of their work that make the greatest difference to pupils' education. Already, their actions show positive impact, including pupils' increased attendance, improved outcomes in national tests and effective support for vulnerable pupils, such as those with special

educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are highly evaluative. They closely analyse trends and data to challenge and further refine their work so that it has the intended impact.

Leaders, including trust directors and members of the local governing body, have an accurate understanding of the school's context. They present an unwavering commitment to pupils and families. The trust and governing body work effectively to hold school leaders to account. They draw on educational research to guide decisions and direct resources to areas of greatest need, for example improving outcomes and opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are ambitious and recognise that further priorities remain to ensure that pupils benefit fully from their time in school.

Staff are highly positive about the school. Leaders ensure that staff wellbeing and workload are considered carefully when implementing changes. Staff value leaders' recognition of their professional skills. They benefit from the training provided to develop in their roles, which enables them to support the agreed school priorities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's context. They successfully broaden pupils' learning through pertinent topics that prepare them for life beyond academic studies, including relationships, health and sex education, online and offline personal safety, and fundamental British values. This provision is effective, though pupils' understanding of different forms of discrimination is less secure and developed than other topics they have been taught.

The school places a high priority on developing pupils' character and helping them to apply learned skills in their wider lives. For example, pupils who participated in the Year 6 residential visit were able to transfer their experience of building resilience in various challenges back to their time in school. This further enhanced their attitudes towards academic studies.

Pupils enjoy learning about pertinent issues in the world around them. They respect other people's beliefs and cultures. From the early years, children learn about people from different backgrounds. The school draws on its multicultural population to celebrate diversity.

Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of their feelings and emotions. For example, pupils learn about different parts of the brain relating to different behaviours. Pupils learn to apply appropriate strategies when certain areas of the brain are more active, such as calm breathing when they know that they are feeling anxious.

Pupils take part in a wide range of opportunities to engage them in sports and activities, such as participating in musical concerts. Leaders prioritise removing any barriers to pupils' involvement in these wider opportunities and experiences. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, are fully involved in the life of the school and the enrichment offer that is provided.

Leaders make sure that staff are trained effectively and that they are well placed to provide appropriate and timely pastoral support. Pupils benefit from the wide range of provision that the school offers, including emotional support.

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## Needs attention

### Achievement

Needs attention 

In some curriculum areas, including those for which there are national tests, pupils do not achieve well. This is primarily because of inconsistencies in the way that the curriculum is delivered and because misunderstandings in pupils' knowledge are not addressed quickly. Pupils' achievement is improving due to leaders prioritising and taking appropriate actions. However, pupils at the school tend to achieve below the national averages in key stage 2 assessments, particularly in mathematics and the fundamental aspects of writing, such as spelling and grammar. As a result, they are not prepared as effectively as they need to be for their future learning. Likewise, due to the weaknesses in the early years curriculum, some children in Reception Year are not prepared sufficiently well for their next steps in their education.

Pupils who are disadvantaged generally achieve in line with similar groups of pupils in national tests. Additionally, many of these pupils, as well as many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress through the curriculum from typically low starting points.

### Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum that clearly sets out the important knowledge that pupils need to know in a logical order. However, the curriculum is not delivered consistently well. Sometimes the activities that teachers choose to deliver the learning do not help pupils to know and remember the key information. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This is particularly true of pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and their basic knowledge in mathematics. While the school does have an approach for teachers to identify and respond to pupils who have not grasped key knowledge, the impact this has on improving learning is variable. This means that some pupils carry misconceptions in their knowledge over time.

Leaders have a clear oversight of the quality of the curriculum and teaching. They have rightly prioritised bringing about improvement and doing so swiftly. Teachers have received training to improve their understanding of how to deliver the curriculum. Consequently, they have begun to select more appropriate activities which enable pupils to learn the intended curriculum content. However, the impact of this action is at an early stage.

Conversely, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective help. Teachers provide tailored learning and appropriate adaptations that enable pupils to know and remember more.

Some children in the early years are not ready for the next stage of learning. This is because aspects of the curriculum do not clearly identify the important information that children need to learn. Staff do not routinely use high-quality interactions to teach children the vocabulary and language that they need. This is because they are unclear about the specific knowledge that children should gain. Leaders recognise this and have implemented swift and appropriate actions to bring about change. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work.

Children in the Nursery Year learn the skills that they need to get ready to learn to read. The Reception Year typically builds on this learning to help most children to develop the phonics knowledge required to start reading and writing accurately.

Children in both the Nursery Year and the Reception Year are well cared for and happy. They develop independence and learn important social skills, such as taking turns and beginning to understand different emotions.

Leaders prioritise working positively with parents and carers to build warm, trusting relationships from the start. This provides an early gateway to securing help for families who may face barriers to supporting their children's education, such as ensuring regular attendance.

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

Pupils are proud to attend this warm and caring school, and they do so increasingly well. Pupils know that they are valued and appreciated as individuals. They recognise each other's uniqueness, while celebrating being together as one whole school.

Pupils feel safe. They arrive happily in the morning and greet each other with cheerful smiles. They extend this friendly welcome readily to visitors with polite conversation. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that any issues are dealt with swiftly by staff.

In the main, pupils behave well. They are attentive in lessons and play kindly and sensibly together at breaktimes. Older pupils enjoy supporting the youngest children in the school, acting as 'buddies' to model appropriate behaviours. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards each other and to adults. They move around the school calmly, holding doors open for other people.

While pupils enjoy their learning, many do not achieve as well as they should. This includes children in the early years. Inconsistent teaching approaches prevent some pupils from securing knowledge of the curriculum. This leaves persistent gaps in their basic writing and mathematical knowledge that hinder their progress. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' achievement and have prioritised the necessary action to take. This work is starting to make a positive difference to pupils' education. However, this is not consistently reflected in their learning or in nationally published outcomes.

Leaders ensure that the school offers exciting and purposeful enrichment opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. For example, some pupils visit the local high school to take part in exciting learning opportunities. Other pupils have visited a university to inspire them in their education. Leaders make sure that this offer is open and accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers use checks on learning effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in transcription and mathematics, to address misconceptions swiftly and to help pupils to achieve well.
  - Leaders should ensure that the activities that teachers select to deliver the learning are consistently well matched to the school's curriculum and enable pupils to learn the important information that has been set out.
  - Leaders should complete their recent revisions to the early years curriculum to ensure that this supports children's learning effectively and improves their readiness for the next stage.
  - Leaders should ensure that, in the early years, staff consistently and routinely engage in high-quality interactions with children to help them to develop the language and vocabulary that will help them to know, understand and remember more.
  - Leaders should deepen pupils' understanding of different forms of discrimination.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Mater Ecclesiae Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Peter Duffy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Roger Mason.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and several other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with the CEO and the director of education for the trust, as well as members of the trust board of directors, including the chair of the trust board of directors. In addition, the lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing board. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Lancaster.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2024.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection in status and in leadership. St Teresa's Catholic Primary School opened as an academy converter in December 2022. The current headteacher took up the role in September 2024.

Headteacher: James Kay

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### Lead inspector:

Sheena Clark, His Majesty's Inspector


### Team inspectors:

Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham, 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 25 November 2025

# School and pupil context

## Total pupils

**206**

Close to average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

## School capacity

**210**

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)

**47.80%**

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

**3.40%**

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**

**15.05%**

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 maths**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
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<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		61%	
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Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	47%	62%	Below
2023/24	37%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25	70%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	63%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25	63%	72%	Below
2023/24	50%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		73%	
<b>2024/25</b>	60%	74%	Below
<b>2023/24</b>	73%	73%	Close to average
<b>2022/23</b>		73%	

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		46%	
<b>2024/25</b>	43%	47%	Close to average
<b>2023/24</b>	28%	46%	Below
<b>2022/23</b>		44%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		62%	
<b>2024/25</b>	62%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25	57%	59%	Close to average
2023/24	44%	58%	Below
2022/23		58%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

### Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		68%	
<b>2024/25</b>	43%	69%	-26 pp
<b>2023/24</b>	28%	67%	-40 pp
<b>2022/23</b>		66%	

## Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		80%	
<b>2024/25</b>	62%	81%	-19 pp
<b>2023/24</b>	56%	80%	-24 pp
<b>2022/23</b>		78%	

## Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		78%	
<b>2024/25</b>	57%	78%	-21 pp
<b>2023/24</b>	44%	78%	-33 pp
<b>2022/23</b>		77%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		80%	
<b>2024/25</b>	57%	81%	-23 pp
<b>2023/24</b>	67%	79%	-13 pp
<b>2022/23</b>		79%	

### Absence

#### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>2024/25 (1 term)</b>	7.6%	5.1%	Above
<b>2023/24</b>	8.2%	5.5%	Above
<b>2022/23</b>	8.5%	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 (1 term)	23.0%	14.3%	Above
2023/24	30.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23	30.8%	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 standards expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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