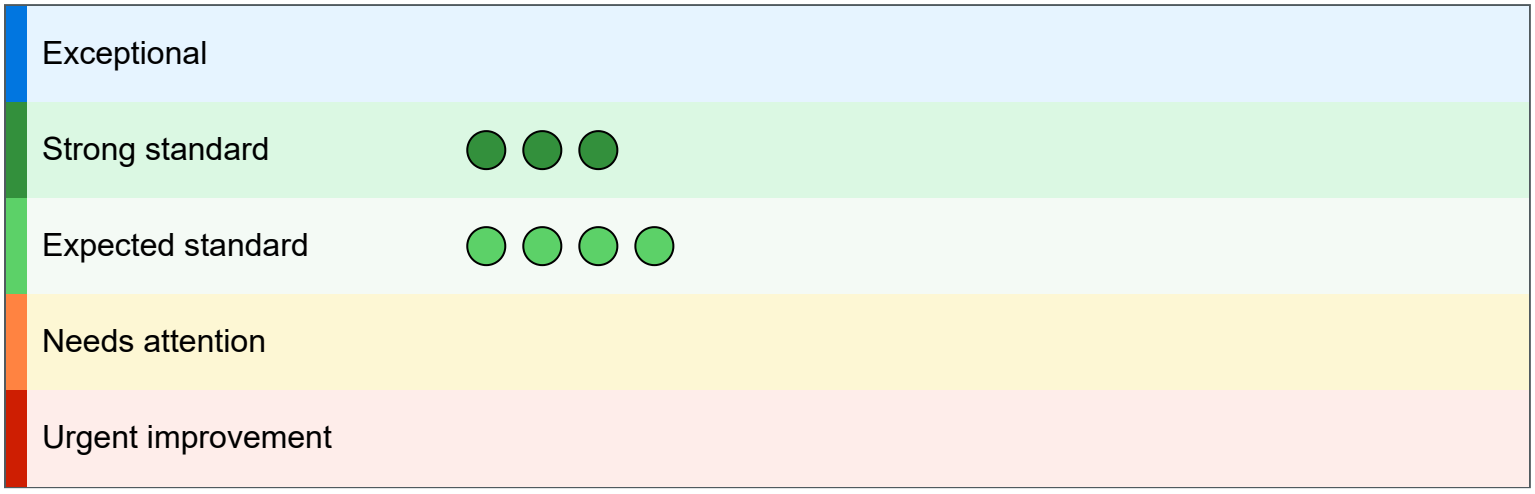
Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Address: Halifax Road, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 5BL

Unique reference number (URN): 149125

Inspection report: 14 July 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Early years

Strong standard

Children in the early years have a successful start to their education. They settle promptly because routines are calm and consistent. Staff know children well and create a warm, welcoming and purposeful environment. Children play and learn with confidence and independence.

Leaders visit early years provision regularly so they understand how well children are learning. Early writing is a priority. Children enthusiastically build writing skills through play. Staff help children develop a consistent pencil grip and form letters correctly. The curriculum gives children regular practise in early reading and number. Phonics is taught consistently well.

Staff talk with children throughout the day to help them develop their communication skills. They model new words and ask questions that helps children deepen their understanding. This supports children to speak clearly, build confidence and use new vocabulary in their play and early writing. Staff identify gaps in learning and give children extra practise so they keep up. This includes children with additional needs, who receive timely additional support that helps them to succeed.

Teachers organise the curriculum so that children build important knowledge. Staff have a secure understanding of each child's next steps. They monitor progress closely and share this regularly with parents and carers. This helps families support learning at home. Children leave Reception very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have created a culture where pupils' needs are identified quickly and understood well. Staff notice pupils' emerging challenges and act promptly so they receive the right help at the right time. Targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are accurately matched to pupils' difficulties. Staff work with specialists and families to review next steps and ensure this support is well coordinated.

Pupils with additional barriers learn successfully alongside their peers. Staff prepare resources that help some pupils understand new ideas. These adjustments aid pupils to stay focused and build confidence. Calm routines and explanations support pupils to develop increasing independence. Pupils who are known to social care receive well-matched emotional and academic support that helps them feel safe and included.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to reduce barriers. Their actions support early reading, communication and attendance. This makes a sustained difference to the progress of these pupils. Additional spaces have been designed for pupils with additional needs to help manage their emotions. Staff use these resources effectively, so pupils regulate and re-engage with learning. Leaders monitor the impact of the support they offer and adjust provision swiftly when needed. As a result, pupils thrive socially and academically.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have designed a highly effective personal development programme. Pupils benefit from a vast range of experiences that help them grow in character. Leaders track participation carefully so that all pupils are able to access these opportunities.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and well. Pupils talk confidently about their understanding of online safety, water safety, road safety and how to respond to risks in the local area. Visits from the police and fire service strengthen this learning. Pupils also learn how to recognise worries, understand healthy routines and manage friendships. They know who to speak to if they are upset and trust staff to listen and help.

Carefully chosen literature helps pupils explore themes of fairness, difference and equality. They treat others with kindness and respect. This is regardless of their background, identity or personal circumstances. Pupils link their understanding of fundamental British values to school life. For example, when voting for pupil leaders and making shared decisions. Multi-faith activities with nearby schools help pupils learn about other beliefs and traditions.

Pupils take on a wide variety of leadership roles that offers them a sense of responsibility. These posts help them contribute positively to school life. Some pupils raise awareness of healthy eating and nutrition by growing vegetables. They work with leaders to make healthy school menus. Older pupils take part in the 'Gardener to Seeds' project. Here, they develop nurturing relationships with younger children through play, letter writing and mentoring. These opportunities build pupil's teamwork skills, confidence and sense of belonging. Charity work and community visits further strengthens their understanding of compassion and service.

Wellbeing support is a central part of the school's work. Pupils receive timely help from staff and are offered links with wider services, if needed. A rich programme of clubs and memorable experiences, including the Year 6 trip to London, further broadens pupils' interests. Pupils move on as confident, thoughtful young people ready for their next stage.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. They develop the knowledge and skills they need for their next stage of learning. This is evident in the positive results they attain in national tests, which sits above national averages. Pupils benefit from precise teaching in reading, enabling them to read fluently. Recent work in phonics has ensured that current pupils now learn sounds securely. Pupils present their writing neatly and spell accurately. They recall key mathematical facts and methods with increasing confidence. Pupils in Year 4 have achieved consistently well in the multiplication tables check over time. Those who need extra help benefit from additional support sessions to help in areas they find difficult.

Across subjects, pupils remember important ideas and talk about their learning with confidence. Occasionally, some pupils do not learn in the depth they could. Revision work

encourages pupils to revisit previous content and make links between topics. Pupils with additional needs are supported well to make suitable progress from their starting points.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise the importance of regular attendance. They check attendance patterns often and notice when pupils need support. As a result, overall attendance figures are in line with national averages. If attendance dips, leaders work closely with families to understand the reason and to offer support. This has helped reduce persistent absence over time, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils is lower this year. Leaders understand the individual circumstances behind this and are supporting these families well. Leaders know that some pupils still need further help to attend regularly. They are continuing their work to reduce persistent absence for these groups.

Pupils behave very well and are a credit to the school. They are polite, respectful and follow routines consistently. Pupils show enthusiastic attitudes to learning and move around school sensibly. Pupils trust staff to deal with any unkind behaviour. They appreciate that staff take time to help them resolve disagreements through open conversations that ensure everyone is listened to. Staff support pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions by offering calming spaces and strategies that help them settle. These pupils return to learning quickly. Pupils live out their school rules and values through their hardworking and respectful behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of the curriculum and how well it is taught. They have refined the curriculum so that learning is organised well. This sets out what pupils should learn and how new ideas build on what they already know. In lessons, teachers show pupils what they need to do and give detailed examples that make new learning easy to follow. They revisit earlier lessons and use questions to check pupils' understanding. These approaches are highly effective, although they are not used with consistency across all classes.

Reading is a key focus. Phonics is taught accurately, and pupils practise reading with books that match the sounds they know. Leaders have developed a more consistent approach to handwriting across the school. They make sure pupils learn the essential knowledge they need in mathematics. Pupils who need extra help with learning receive targeted support so they can keep up.

Teachers know their pupils well. They consider pupils who find learning difficult when designing tasks. They offer additional helpful resources help their learning. Teachers build simple revision aids for each topic using pupils' work. These are used well to assist pupils to revisit important ideas and make links between subjects.

Leadership and governance **Expected standard**

Leaders know the school well. They focus on what matters most for pupils and make decisions that keep pupil's needs at the centre. Leaders check how well their priorities are working by visiting lessons, talking with pupils and looking at work. Recent work to strengthen writing is making a notable difference. Pupils form letters more accurately and write with greater fluency. Leaders use support from the trust and external professionals to refine their approach and guide staff with practical advice.

Staff feel valued and supported. Leaders think carefully about workload and wellbeing, and staff say this makes a difference. Leaders place an emphasis on staff training, linked to the school's priorities, which helps staff build expertise. Teachers at the start of their careers benefit from time away from class. Here, they develop their skills through observing other colleagues and sharing reflections with their mentors. Teaching assistants value the specific guidance that helps them carry out their roles well.

Governors and trustees understand the school's context and fulfil their statutory duties. They visit the school to speak with staff and see the school's work first hand. Governors receive detailed information from school leaders. This helps them understand attendance, behaviour and support for pupils with additional barriers. They use this knowledge to ask helpful questions and provide appropriate challenge. Leaders and governors work closely with families, the parish and the wider community. Parents and carers speak positively about the school's direction and value the sense of belonging the school provides. Leaders recognise the impact of their recent work but remain committed to strengthening the school further.

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

Pupils are proud to belong to this caring school. They arrive each morning to a warm welcome and settle quickly because routines are calm and familiar. Children in the early years make a successful start to their education. Staff know them well and help them feel safe and ready to learn. Across the school, pupils know exactly who to speak to if they have a worry. They trust staff to listen and to act quickly if something is wrong. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and mutually respectful. Both in the classroom and at recreation times, pupils behave well. They move sensibly between activities and treat each other kindly. Pupils know that staff would support them in resolving any disagreements.

Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well across the curriculum. They talk with enthusiasm about their favourite subjects. They particularly enjoy practical activities, such as preparing food, carrying out science investigations and taking part in outdoor fieldwork. They recognise how teachers help them remember important ideas. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to revisit previous lessons. This helps them build confidence and understand new ideas. Those who find learning more difficult benefit from simple adjustments that help them take part in lessons. Pupils with additional needs are included and supported well.

Older pupils look out for younger children, helping them settle into school life and build early connections. Many pupils take on leadership roles. These include supporting environmental work, pupil wellbeing and assisting at church, sports and fundraising events.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs, trips and activities on offer. These experiences broaden their interests and help them develop confidence, teamwork and responsibility. Pupils attend regularly and feel connected to a school, where everyone is valued, cared for and encouraged to do their best.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded consistently throughout the school, so pupils can further deepen their knowledge of important content.
- Leaders should further embed their work around attendance to ensure all pupils attend school regularly and that the persistent absence of some groups of pupils is further reduced.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of local governors for this school is Paul Dempsey.

This school is part of Romero Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Katy Cox, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Ager.

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 other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with the CEO of the trust, members of the board of trustees, members of the local governing body, as well as representatives from the local authority and Diocese of Salford.

Inspectors also spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

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

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

This inspection took place on Tuesday 14th July 2026 and Wednesday 15th July 2026.

Headteacher: Mary Lyle

Lead inspector:
Andy Beattie, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Sharon Cliff, 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 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

122
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

133
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)

22.32%

Close to 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

8.20%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.02%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support 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		61%	
2024/25 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2023/24		61%	
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 (final)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24		74%	
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 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24		72%	
2022/23		71%	

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		73%	
2024/25 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2023/24		73%	
2022/23		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 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 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24		46%	
2022/23		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
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24		62%	
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 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24		58%	
2022/23		58%	

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 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24		59%	
2022/23		59%	

‘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 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24		67%	
2022/23		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
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		80%	
2022/23		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
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24		78%	
2022/23		77%	

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 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24		79%	

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

‘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)	4.1%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.7%	5.5%	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)	9.6%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	14.6%	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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