


St Wilfrids Catholic Primary School

Address: Golborne Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, WN4 8SJ

Unique reference number (URN): 106509

Inspection report: 24 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

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

How we evaluate safeguarding

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

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

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve at levels similar to other pupils nationally. This is reflected in most of the school's published results from national tests. Most pupils develop the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged.

Pupils' current phonics knowledge, and how they use this when reading, is more secure than the published Year 1 phonics screening check scores suggest. Most pupils read fluently and accurately by the end of key stage 1.

Pupils remember much of their learning from the wider curriculum. They build a secure base of useful knowledge that prepares them for their future learning in Year 7 and beyond. However, some pupils do not develop fluency in their written work as well as they could.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders make sure that pupils attend school regularly. They take swift and effective action to improve attendance and punctuality when these begin to cause concern. Attendance rates are at least in line with the national average and often higher, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils value the awards they receive for attending regularly and on time.

Leaders have high expectations for behaviour. They provide effective support and guidance for staff to ensure a consistency of approach. Leaders encourage and support pupils to behave well. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and behave well throughout the day. They follow the school's well-established routines and respond to consistent approaches from staff, which helps learning to continue without disruption. Pupils show respectful attitudes to each other.

Caring and skilled staff provide effective support for pupils who find managing their own behaviour more difficult. Leaders deal thoroughly with rare incidents of derogatory language, bullying or unacceptable behaviour and provide sensitive support for pupils affected by this. This leads to a calm, orderly and respectful environment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of how well pupils learn. They take action when the curriculum needs further development, such as their recent focus on handwriting.

Leaders have developed and refined the curriculum. It is broad and ambitious. It sets out clearly what pupils should learn and helps them build on what they already know. For example, pupils in Year 1 continue to develop the secure reading, writing and mathematics knowledge gained in the early years. Teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum with confidence. They provide effective support to pupils in developing their written and spoken language.

Teachers try different strategies when pupils struggle. Although this is usually effective, at times teachers do not have sufficient expertise to recognise which strategies are the most helpful for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders ensure pupils have the reading knowledge they need to access the curriculum. Teachers deliver the phonics programme consistently and identify pupils who struggle with reading. These pupils practise regularly with trained staff until they read fluently and accurately.

Teachers usually check pupils' understanding before moving on. At times, these checks are not thorough enough and gaps in pupils' knowledge remain unnoticed or unaddressed.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum successfully helps children to build knowledge and skills across all areas of learning, from Nursery to the end of Reception. Children are well prepared for their transition into Year 1. Teachers work closely with parents and carers. For example, they provide guidance so that parents know how to support their children's learning at home.

Staff engage children in high-quality conversations. This helps to develop children's communication and language skills. Children cooperate with each other and form warm, positive relationships with staff.

Children in the Nursery Year learn to recognise different sounds. This prepares them well for learning about phonics in later years. Most children develop secure phonics knowledge in Reception and read words successfully.

Leaders ensure staff understand the differing needs of children. Staff identify and address many of the additional challenges that children face, such as speech and language difficulties. However, staff are less aware of some other types of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that children may have. As a result, some children with SEND do not progress through the curriculum as well as they could.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They work closely with parents, carers and other agencies to identify what additional support disadvantaged pupils may need. Leaders use this information effectively, and in most cases, pupils are well supported. Leaders make sure that additional funding or resources provided for disadvantaged pupils are typically used effectively. Leaders check these pupils' progress through the curriculum regularly. They adapt plans when disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as expected. All pupils access the curriculum alongside their classmates. Most teachers provide helpful resources and adapt their practice to support pupils with differing needs to enable them to participate more fully. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Processes for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), although typically effective, are not as efficient as they could be. Leaders do not support teachers as well as they could to be proactive in this aspect of their work. For example, teachers' individual expertise in how to identify and support pupils with a range of different

SEND needs varies. This means that sometimes teachers are less responsive to how pupils' needs change over time.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They take appropriate action, and the impact of leaders' work is clear. Their actions are firmly rooted in pupils' best interests. Leaders focus closely on identifying and meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They apply their own expertise and experience successfully. These help them to carry out their statutory duties efficiently. For example, governors provide effective support and challenge for leaders. They ensure that pupils are safe and happy at school. Governors strive to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. They adapt their plans when the context of the school changes.

Leaders have high expectations of teachers and generally ensure that staff are well trained and supported. On the whole, this helps teachers and other members of staff working at the school to carry out their roles successfully. However, the school's approach to leading and managing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not as efficient as it could be. Teachers rely heavily on leaders to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This sometimes increases workload for both teachers and leaders.

There is a strong sense of community at the school. Staff find leaders approachable. They value decisions that leaders take to make their workload more manageable.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders support pupils to develop resilience and integrity during their time at the school. They provide experiences throughout the curriculum that enrich pupils' learning and broaden pupils' understanding of the world beyond the school gates. Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular activities that develop and expand pupils' talents and interests. They provide additional support to make sure that disadvantaged pupils access these and benefit equally.

Wellbeing is a priority at the school. Pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy in mind and body. They know how to protect themselves and others from potential harm when online. Pupils develop active and healthy lifestyles. They also enjoy periods of quiet reflection that take place during assembly time or classroom activities. Leaders provide high-quality pastoral support for pupils who feel worried or overwhelmed. Staff are well trained to provide the support that pupils need.

Pupils take part in activities that help them to understand how to make a positive contribution to society. They enjoy helping others. Pupils willingly support other pupils or members of staff by helping out around the school. Similarly, they take part in fundraising for local, national and international charities with enthusiasm.

Pupils learn how to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others. They recognise

the value of consideration, kindness and mutual respect. Pupils also develop confidence in speaking up when others are not behaving as they should.

Pupils learn how to take turns and listen to others' views. They take part in debates and democratic processes, such as voting. They understand the importance of following rules. Pupils recognise the value of adhering to agreed social conventions and fundamental British values. They show a secure recall of learning linked to themes such as social inequality.

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

The school is a safe, calm and harmonious place. Children in the early years settle quickly. They develop confidence and independence. Pupils enjoy their time at school. Most are punctual and attend regularly. Pupils embrace their purposeful morning activities with determination. These help to prepare them for the day ahead.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. They show respect for others, regardless of differences.

Pupils enjoy physical activity during breaktimes. They understand how this contributes to their wellbeing. Pupils trust staff to resolve any minor disagreements that occur. Leaders ensure that incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying, are dealt with thoroughly. They provide effective support for pupils who find it more difficult to manage their emotions.

Leaders make sure that pupils receive suitable support to overcome barriers that they may face. For example, some pupils join the school from other countries. Leaders ensure that if these pupils speak English as an additional language, they quickly develop their language skills and benefit from resources to help them access learning.

Pupils typically achieve well. They build up their knowledge steadily as they progress through the school. Pupils are typically well prepared for their next stages of education.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils make the most of the high-quality opportunities on offer. They attend a wide range of clubs that help them to develop new skills and talents. Pupils carry out a range of leadership roles with pride, such as acting as a school councillor, play leader or wellbeing champion. Through opportunities such as these, pupils learn how to make a positive contribution to their school and its wider community. They are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop teachers' knowledge and expertise in identifying and supporting different types of special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable them to meet these pupils' needs more efficiently.

- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in handwriting, so that all pupils make the best possible progress.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is John Rowbotham.

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. Its last section 48 inspection took place in 2024.

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 leaders at the school. An inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing board. An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority. They also spoke with a representative from the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Headteacher: Geraldine O' Brien

Lead inspector:

Claire Cropper, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Collette Mather, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

197

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

199

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)

19.78%

Close to 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

3.55%

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

11.17%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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	63%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	61%	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 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	84%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	73%	Above

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	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	63%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	59%	Close to average

‘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	39%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	50%	67%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	63%	80%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	78%	-45 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	63%	78%	-15 pp
2022/23 (final)	33%	77%	-44 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	75%	79%	-4 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	79%	-13 pp

'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 (2 term)	4.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.4%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	5.9%	Close to average

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 (2 term)	11.2%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.9%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.8%	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.

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