

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

URN: 119510 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

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.

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils recall their prior learning in different subjects. They are eager to know even more. Published data shows that pupils' attainment, by the end of Year 6, is broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. As many pupils join and leave the school at different times, this information does not fully reflect the impact of the school's work. Pupils who spend all their primary education at the school attain well. Gaps in pupils' subject understanding close quickly because of leaders' careful attention to their individual needs. Leaders use their deep understanding of how pupils who speak English as an additional language can best be helped to learn English. All groups of pupils achieve well from their starting points. Pupils develop the phonics knowledge that they need. Mostly, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 develop their skills in handwriting, grammar and spelling, but sometimes pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that subject curriculums are well organised and enable staff to teach essential knowledge in a logical order. Leaders select topics and activities that enhance pupils' engagement and learning. For example, staff deepen older pupils' knowledge of history and science through thoughtful, educational trips. If pupils miss learning due to absence, they get extra support to catch up on missed work. Staff teach key knowledge clearly and use their careful checks of what pupils know to spot where pupils need more practice or are ready to move on. Leaders' training and support for staff on curriculum content and teaching is well thought out. They ensure that subject expertise, such as in early reading, is shared by the whole team. Leaders put communication, language, phonics and reading at the heart of the school's curriculum. Well-matched reading books and effective teaching help pupils to develop their reading skills. Recently, leaders have revised the school's mathematics curriculum so pupils can explain their mathematical knowledge consistently well. Typically, teaching helps pupils to build and refine their skills in grammar, spelling and handwriting. However, sometimes teaching in this area of the curriculum does not give pupils enough practice to secure these skills before moving on.

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

URN: 119510 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

Early years

Expected standard

Staff talk with children often, modelling the use of important words and showing children how to listen and cooperate with others. Teachers lead this work skilfully, demonstrating the joy of language, stories and rhymes. The school's well-thought-out reading curriculum begins well in the Reception class. Teachers inspire children's curiosity about characters in stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Leaders ensure that staff build skilfully on children's play. Staff introduce children to phonics as quickly and effectively as possible. In addition, staff ensure that children develop their imagination and physical skills. Children make a secure start in learning to write. Leaders ensure that staff prioritise helping children to settle into clear routines. Children quickly learn how to behave well as part of a group. They learn to follow instructions and respect other children's choices and personal space. When children face difficulties in their learning, staff link very effectively with parents, carers, previous settings and with other professionals. This ensures that children's needs are quickly spotted and understood. As a result, the early years plays a key role in the early identification and support of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders consider carefully and act swiftly to address any barriers that pupils face. Staff know pupils' needs and their starting points well. Leaders act on this information appropriately. They ensure that extra funding is used effectively. For example, they employ additional staff who skilfully support disadvantaged pupils with their learning. Over time, disadvantaged pupils and other groups of pupils at the school achieve well. Pupils, parents and carers speak highly of the support the school provides. Leaders and staff have an expert understanding of how to help pupils who speak English as an additional language. They provide effective support, such as through the help of bilingual support staff. They tackle any challenges for pupils. This helps pupils to learn the curriculum well. Leaders ensure that staff have the right knowledge and support to quickly identify and help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They carefully check the impact of the support they put in place with other professionals and with parents. Senior leaders review the wider impact of the school's inclusion work with skill and determination. Expected standard

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders understand the context of the school and the challenges it faces. They use their clear understanding of the needs of pupils, families and the community to shape the school's priorities for improvement. At the heart of the school's success is leaders' thoughtful attention to each pupil's unique circumstances and needs. Leaders are determined that they and staff support pupils' education effectively, including for those pupils who are new to the UK. Typically, leaders' decisions focus on whether the support that staff provide is right for each pupil at this

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

URN: 119510 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

point of their education. This means, for example, that effective support is in place to help the many pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Leaders ensure that staff, including those new to teaching, benefit from the training and individual support programmes that leaders provide. Staff learn words in different languages from one another so they can better support pupils who speak EAL. Staff feel valued and motivated. They benefit from the supportive culture that leaders have established, including on behaviour and special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders take action to ensure that staff have a reasonable workload, such as through the recently revised marking scheme. Governors understand their role. They keep their focus on the school's long-term priorities and challenges. Governors provide some challenge as well as support to leaders. However, some of their understanding of the leaders' curriculum priorities is not well developed, which holds them back from being as effective as they could be. Personal development and well-being Expected standard Leaders ensure that pupils develop the knowledge that they need for their future lives. For example, pupils learn about online safety, healthy relationships and healthy eating. Pupils secure valuable knowledge about these important topics; for instance, pupils speak confidently about the importance of protein in a healthy diet. Pupils' responsibilities as prefects and school councillors are well established. Pupils play a role in school life, such as chaplains leading a silence on Remembrance Day. Leaders think carefully about whether any disadvantaged pupils need extra help. They put this in place; for example, leaders arrange individual support for pupils who need help with their emotions and mental health. This enhances pupils' ability to feel calm and ready to learn. Throughout the school, pupils have many positive, friendly relationships. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils know how families and communities can be unique. They recognise that people may have different but equally rich cultures and beliefs to one another.

Pupils live by the values that leaders have introduced at the school. They understand the need for harmony between different communities. They value opportunities to take part in charitable fundraising. Pupils understand important concepts such as tolerance. They know about the rule of law. However, pupils are less able to explain these concepts as fundamental British values and the place of these in British life. Older pupils relished their recent, inspiring visit to a local university and recall this in detail. Leaders and staff help pupils to be ambitious for their future lives. For example, several pupils aspire to be a dentist, artist, teacher, lawyer, hospital doctor or GP.

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

Pupils feel safe because leaders ensure that they are welcomed, included and able to express their thoughts and opinions. Leaders and staff are deeply interested in each child's unique needs and life experiences. Pupils who join the school in different year groups and at different times of the year, including those who speak English as an additional language, have many opportunities to settle in and to learn the curriculum effectively. For example, in the early years, staff meet with parents and carers of children who are new to living in the UK. Staff seek to understand and support children's language needs. They assess accurately whether children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils at the school flourish. They are happy, feel good about themselves and develop many friendships. In classrooms and around the school, pupils' behaviour is thoughtful and sensible. Pupils show high levels of self-control. For example, they enter the hall for special assemblies in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils typically know and rise to leaders' high expectations for their conduct. Leaders deal with issues of bullying effectively, giving pupils the support that they need. Pupils enjoy their studies and apply

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

URN: 119510 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

themselves well in lessons. Classrooms are calm. Teaching focuses on helping pupils to learn the curriculum and achieve well. Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities that the school provides. For example, older pupils relish being prefects and helping younger pupils, such as with their reading. Pupils gain much knowledge from the school's educational trips, for example to castles, farms, museums and the zoo. Pupils learn to be interested in, and respectful of, other people's views and lives. Leaders promote care and compassion. Pupils' attendance at the school is improving over time because of the actions that leaders take.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the teaching of writing improves pupils' foundational knowledge of grammar, spelling and the quality of their handwriting.
- Governors should deepen their understanding of the school's curriculum priorities so that they are well placed to challenge and support leaders' work.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils understand how the school's values that they follow in their behaviour and conduct link with fundamental British values.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders track and analyse absence information very carefully. This helps them to understand the causes of pupil absence. Staff take appropriate action to improve attendance. As a result of the work of leaders and staff, pupils' attendance is improving over time and persistent absence is reducing.

Pupils arrive punctually at school to begin their studies. They are greeted by staff, who welcome them warmly. Pupils across the school settle quickly into activities in classes. They revisit previous learning before main lessons begin. Pupils behave very well. They are effectively supported by staff to understand and follow the school rules. Routines are well established from the start. Pupils are keen to learn in lessons and love sharing what they know with others. For pupils who are new to living in the UK, leaders' very clear and effective arrangements help them to settle in quickly. Respect and self-control are at the heart of the school's culture. Pupils who struggle to manage their feelings and actions learn quickly how to behave well.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/sacred-heart-roman-catholic-primary-school-blackburn-blackburn>