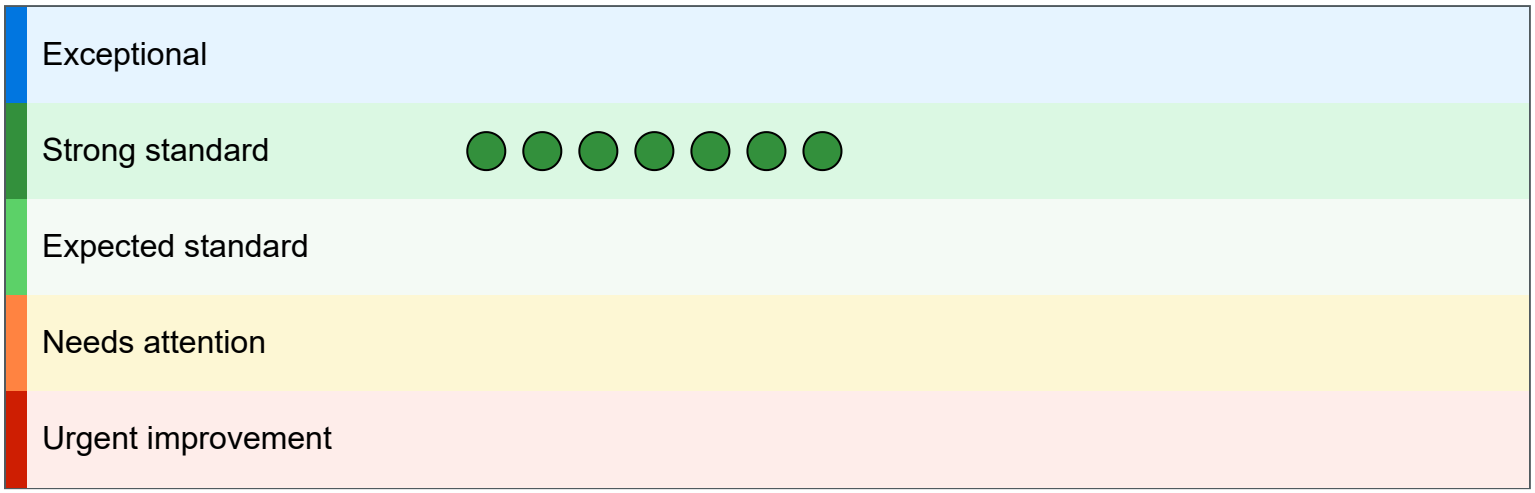
Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Address: Old Hall Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 2JA

Unique reference number (URN): 106345

Inspection report: 15 September 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

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve very well from their starting points. Their work is of a consistently high standard. This begins in the early years where there is a sharp focus on mastering the basics. As a result, pupils secure the important knowledge and skills they need for future learning. Typically, pupils' attainment is significantly above average in national tests. This includes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This means that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are very well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils succeed across the curriculum. In a wide range of subjects, they can recall the important knowledge they have been taught. For instance, pupils have a detailed understanding of the causes and impact of the Great Fire of London. Pupils can make connections between their learning in different subjects. For example, older pupils can connect their learning about global trade in geography to their study of the ancient Maya civilisation in history.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders have established a culture in which excellent attendance is expected and celebrated. Very few pupils miss school regularly. Attendance is consistently above the national average for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and shows continued improvement over time. Leaders carefully monitor pupil absences and the reasons for them. This means that leaders identify potential concerns around pupil attendance swiftly and provide a highly supportive approach to address the problem. They work alongside parents to remove the barriers to attendance that pupils may face. This approach is very successful.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This positive behaviour is underpinned by the school's values, which pupils know well. Leaders have established high expectations. These are reinforced by all staff using consistent mantras such as 'wonderful walking' and 'marvellous manners'. Older pupils take pride in setting an excellent example to their younger peers. This creates a calm, respectful and safe environment. Bullying and any form of discrimination or harassment are rare and dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils who need additional support receive highly effective, tailored provision that helps them to manage their emotions and make positive choices.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have established a well-structured and ambitious curriculum. They continue to adapt and refine this curriculum and the teaching strategies that staff use. For instance, they recently enhanced the curriculum for handwriting in response to the needs of pupils.

Staff have the knowledge and expertise they need to teach subjects well. They plan memorable and engaging lessons. Staff use effective strategies to support pupils to remember the important knowledge that they have been taught. For instance, 'rapid recall'

tasks are planned at the beginning of every lesson to help embed pupils' learning. Staff are ambitious for their pupils and insist on high standards. For example, they have the same high expectations for pupils' writing across all subjects.

Early reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised. Staff teach the school's phonics programme skilfully and pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. Staff are aware of any gaps that pupils may have in their basic knowledge and skills. They plan activities that are highly responsive to the individual starting points of these pupils.

Inclusive teaching strategies are used consistently across the school. This includes the use of visual timetables and the provision of 'sensory walls' and 'Zen zones' to help pupils manage their emotions. These approaches benefit all pupils. Specific adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are timely and personalised.

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced early years curriculum. Staff embed routines quickly, work closely with families and get to know each child well. This means that children settle happily and are ready to learn. They are very well cared for. Children behave well throughout the day. Classrooms and outdoor learning spaces are calm.

Leaders know children's starting points and are clear about what they want them to learn. This helps staff to make the most of every opportunity to extend learning. For example, staff use high-quality conversations, purposeful questioning and carefully planned play. This develops children's language, curiosity and thinking across each part of the day.

Leaders place a careful emphasis on physical development. They draw on expertise from professionals to deliver well-planned activities that help children develop their core strength and coordination. Staff teach these activities well and make the most of every learning opportunity. For instance, children in nursery practise taking turns and following instructions while completing a challenging movement task. Staff make careful adaptations to their teaching so that children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve highly across the early years curriculum. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have established a highly inclusive culture at Holy Family. Pupils adore the popular 'be unique club' that celebrates neurodiversity and individuality. Leaders provide high-quality training so that staff identify the needs of pupils quickly and accurately. This means that staff provide effective support without delay.

Leaders know pupils and families extremely well. They have also established highly effective partnerships with external agencies, including the local authority. This means that staff, parents and external professionals work together closely to plan support for pupils who need it. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who

speak English as an additional language. Staff use these plans to make effective and precise adaptations that support pupils to access learning alongside their peers.

Leaders use additional funding skilfully to improve the academic outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged pupils. For instance, they join the school's 'star club' where they go on visits to museums, libraries and theatres. These pupils also receive effective and tailored support in lessons from well-trained staff. This means that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and access all that the school has to offer.

Leaders maintain rigorous oversight of the impact of the support that pupils receive. They take prompt action to adjust support when necessary.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders and governors have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that would benefit from further refinement. They use this knowledge to inform their astute decision-making which always puts pupils' needs and interests first.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including those relating to safeguarding. They are ambitious and evaluate the impact of the school's strategies with care and precision. As a result, they provide effective support and robust challenge to leaders. Leaders welcome and value this. They continually seek to improve upon the excellent work that they already do.

Leaders invest in staff and prioritise their professional learning. This is planned carefully and strategically so that all staff benefit. As a result, staff feel valued by leaders. Leaders ensure that staff are actively involved in school development planning. Leaders trust staff and seek to make the most of their skills. This creates a motivating environment in which staff thrive. Staff appreciate the actions that leaders and governors take to support their workload and wellbeing. They value the school's family ethos and find leaders to be approachable and supportive.

Leaders are outward-facing and work positively with a wide range of partners. They organise events to support parents. For example, leaders host regular 'chatty group' meetings for parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These provide an opportunity for parents to meet informally for peer support and listen to talks from guest speakers. Parents from other local schools also attend. Parents cherish the school's supportive ethos. They say that staff genuinely care about the wellbeing and development of every child.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have developed a well-planned and ambitious personal development programme that helps pupils grow into confident and responsible young people. This includes an effective relationships and health education programme. The curriculum content is responsive to the school's context and prepares pupils very well for life beyond school. For example, pupils know the risks associated with online activity and have a mature understanding of equality. They can explain why fundamental British values matter and have a detailed understanding of different cultures.

Pastoral support is well embedded. Leaders know pupils extremely well and anticipate when extra help may be needed. For instance, some older pupils attend transition club, which is an extended programme of activities during the summer term of Year 6 to prepare pupils for secondary school. Skilled staff provide specialist support when it is needed, including play therapy and art therapy. This means that pupils thrive.

Leaders provide an extensive programme of enrichment and wider opportunities. Pupils are particularly proud of their leadership roles and the work they do to improve their school and wider society. For example, the communication team gathers the views of pupils across school, the eco council carries out litter picks in the community, and the 'Mini Vinnies' raise funds for local and global charities. Pupils also take part in outdoor learning sessions and enjoy themed curriculum events such as parliament week and diversity week. They play a range of sports and attend clubs such as gardening, craft, crochet and choir. Leaders make sure that all pupils benefit fully from what is on offer, including the most vulnerable. They embed many opportunities within the school's core curriculum and carefully check who takes part in additional activities. Leaders make changes so that more pupils can attend. For example, many clubs take place during lunchtimes.

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

Pupils thrive at this inclusive and nurturing school. They feel safe, enjoy learning and know that they belong. Pupils know the school's mission statement and values. They speak articulately about the difference these values make to them. They say that they help others and show respect.

Positive relationships are the bedrock of school life. As a result, pupils behave extremely well. They listen carefully in lessons and follow school routines. Break times are calm because pupils show respect for one another and manage their emotions well. Bullying and poor behaviour are rare. Pupils trust staff to resolve any issues quickly and effectively. Parents and carers speak very highly of the school. They value the support that staff provide and say that the school feels like a family.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend regularly. They enjoy school and do not want to miss learning or the many wider opportunities on offer. They attend extra-curricular clubs, raise funds for charities and go on visits that deepen their learning. They cherish the various leadership responsibilities that they are given. For example, every pupil in school is a 'kindness disciple'. This means that they plan activities to spread kindness across the community. They give out handmade bookmarks and hide 'golden envelopes' with gift vouchers to use at local businesses. As a result, pupils become confident, kind and mature young people.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and appreciate the variety of ways in which staff make lessons interesting. Those who face any barriers to learning are well supported. This means that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve highly across the curriculum. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed and develop their highly responsive teaching strategies, including the ongoing refinements that they are making to the teaching of handwriting, so that all pupils succeed.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Catherine Timney.

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

This inspection took place on 15 September 2026 and 16 September 2026.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority, the Diocese of Shrewsbury, and members of the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Its last section 48 inspection was in June 2022.

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Ciara Sharvin

Lead inspector:
John Coxhead, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Sharon Cowey, 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 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

199
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: 268

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)

14.12%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.02%
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: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.59%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well 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	72%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	77%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	60%	Above

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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	93%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	78%	73%	Close to average

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	87%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	90%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	71%	Above

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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	87%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	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	56%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	57%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	94%	62%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	83%	60%	Above

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	69%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

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	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	57%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	56%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	69%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	94%	80%	14 pp
2024/25 (final)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 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	69%	78%	-9 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 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	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (final)	57%	81%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 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 (3 term)	4.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	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 (3 term)	9.2%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	15.7%	16.2%	Close to average

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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