

Lancaster Christ Church of England Primary School

Address: Highfield, Derwent Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3ES

Unique reference number (URN): 119532

Inspection report: 9 June 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.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a welcoming and supportive school community. They work with staff to provide a highly effective approach to supporting pupils who have barriers to learning or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps them to make good progress alongside their peers.

Leaders identify pupils' additional needs quickly through robust assessment and monitoring systems. They ensure that staff receive regular, high-quality training so that they can provide effective, tailored support to those pupils who need it. Wherever possible, teachers adapt learning so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. This enables these pupils to achieve well and participate fully in the school's enrichment opportunities.

Leaders work closely with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure that pupils receive the right help. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of the support that is provided for pupils with additional needs. This ensures that resources are used effectively to improve outcomes. Consequently, pupils who face barriers to learning develop into more independent and confident learners. Pupils feel valued and well supported. They learn how to succeed. Pupils who are disadvantaged are well supported academically and emotionally. Precise target setting and effective support help pupils to overcome barriers to learning and make positive, often rapid, progress from their starting points.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. Their outcomes are in line with national averages and exceed them in some areas.

Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to read fluently and accurately. Pupils write well. They quickly master accurate letter formation. Pupils quickly build stamina and write with ambition. Work is typically of a high standard. In mathematics, pupils form numbers correctly and use age-appropriate vocabulary. Pupils routinely link their learning across concepts as complexity builds, for example using repeated subtraction to assist with division.

Across other subjects, the work pupils produce reflects how well learning builds over time. Pupils are able to recall prior knowledge. For example, when describing the journey of a river they confidently use words such as 'oxbow lake' and 'meander'.

By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders keep a close check on pupils' attendance. They use well-established systems to identify patterns or sudden changes in pupils' punctuality and attendance. This means leaders can intervene swiftly if a pupil's attendance declines. Staff communicate with parents and carers to understand why pupils are not in school. Well-thought-out plans are put in place to help remove barriers. If absences are linked to a pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders ensure that appropriate adjustments to approaches are quickly put in place. Leaders draw on support from external agencies where needed.

Across the school, behaviour is orderly and purposeful. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations. Pupils enjoy lessons and want to learn. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils are respectful, polite and curious. They are kind to each other and would not tolerate aggressive or discriminatory behaviour. If disagreements occur, pupils know how to rebuild and repair relationships. They know adults will help them if necessary. Bullying is rare. When it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and decisively. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and how to deal with cyber-bullying. Staff are well equipped to support pupils who might need help with their behaviour. Suspensions are used appropriately.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum which builds logically from the early years to Year 6. The specific knowledge is broken down clearly across subjects. Teachers use this information to build pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary progressively. Leaders prioritise securing the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils. They keep a close check on the quality of pupils' learning. Leaders ensure that staff access high-quality training to equip them to teach and support pupils. This commitment to training, alongside opportunities to visit schools where successful practice is embedded, has enabled leaders to introduce the school's new mathematics programme effectively.

Staff teach phonics well. They regularly revisit sounds and vocabulary to promote fluency and check pupils' understanding. Where gaps are identified, pupils get the support they need to address them. As a result, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, become confident and competent readers. Reading has a high profile across the school, with regular opportunities for pupils to experience high-quality, diverse texts.

Teaching is typically effective. Activities are set to engage and challenge pupils appropriately. Teachers' skilled questioning helps pupils to explain their thinking and deepen their understanding. There are clear systems in place to support pupils who may require additional help. When needed, teachers make carefully considered adaptations to support the reduction of barriers to learning for pupils.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that children have a positive start to their education. The curriculum is carefully designed to enable children to develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. The learning environment is purposeful and stimulating. It provides opportunities

for children to develop their language, mathematical understanding, physical skills and enjoyment of reading. However, sometimes staff miss opportunities to share new vocabulary in its written form. As a result, this limits the opportunities that children have to practise independent reading and fully develop their vocabulary of the world around them.

Staff know children well and respond effectively to their individual needs. Staff use questioning and interactions skilfully to extend children's thinking and develop their vocabulary. Children confidently engage in role play and conversations with staff and their peers. Additional support is identified and provided promptly. This ensures that children receive the help they need to succeed. Children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They sustain concentration and work cooperatively with others. They quickly develop the social skills needed to learn and play together successfully.

Reading is prioritised from the outset. Children develop secure phonics knowledge and apply this confidently when reading. Books are carefully matched to the sounds children know. This helps them to read accurately and build confidence. As a result, children are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They make decisions with pupils' best interests at heart. They know what is working well and where further improvements need to be made. Leaders ensure that staff training is carefully matched to the school's improvement priorities and safeguarding. This means that staff are well prepared to respond effectively to challenges and new initiatives.

Leaders and governors place a high priority on staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff feel very well supported by leaders. They value the opportunities they are given to maintain and develop their subject knowledge. This helps staff to meet the needs of all pupils, including those who have barriers to learning. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

Governors share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. They are committed to the school and bring a wide range of expertise to their roles. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's context. They are aware of the school's strengths and priorities. They provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Governors are proactive. They seek first-hand evidence of leaders' impact through school visits, discussions and scrutiny of information. Consequently, they are well placed to hold leaders to account and ensure that school improvement priorities are evaluated rigorously.

Governors carry out their statutory duties with care and attention. For example, they maintain effective oversight of any additional funding the school receives for pupils who are disadvantaged. They ensure that spending decisions are evidence-informed and focus on improving outcomes.

Most parents and carers speak highly of the positive relationships at the school and the care provided by leaders and other members of staff. Most would recommend the school to others.

Leaders have developed a clear and well-designed programme of personal development. Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing. To support this, they provide a broad range of activities to help pupils thrive both in the classroom and outside of the school day. The carefully considered pastoral offer means that pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), know exactly what to do if they are worried or feel unsafe. Pupils value staff's vigilance and support.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They are knowledgeable about online risks and know why they should not share personal information. Pupils learn about road safety and about the dangers of open water. 'Backseat Boss' training empowers pupils to remind adults about the importance of safe driving habits.

Bell ringer, office assistant, litter picker, reading buddy or school council member. These are just some of the many leadership roles which exist at the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. This supports the development of their self-esteem and helps them to grow in confidence as they contribute meaningfully to daily life in school. Staff and pupils are proud of the school's Christian character. Even so, leaders ensure pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. Consequently, pupils understand and respect lifestyles and beliefs that differ from their own. They consider moral issues and know right from wrong. They understand how their actions can affect others.

Staff develop pupils' talents and interests by providing a range of opportunities outside of the school day. This includes sporting activities, French lessons and art clubs. Pupils in the choir regularly showcase their talent at Blackburn Cathedral and local music festivals. Leaders track participation. They ensure that pupils, including those with SEND and other barriers, do not miss out. Pupils benefit from carefully chosen visits. For example, a trip to London enables pupils to visit famous landmarks and experience the diversity of city life. Opportunities such as this help ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Each morning, pupils enjoy climbing the hill to school. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. This is evident as the staff open the doors and welcome pupils inside. Familiar routines and friendly faces help pupils to feel a sense of safety and belonging. Pupils settle quickly into the rhythm of the school day. They understand the importance of being on time and attending regularly.

Pupils are encouraged to grow academically, socially and personally. Leaders believe that all pupils can succeed and make a positive contribution to the world around them. Pupils value the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and creativity across the curriculum. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. Lessons are designed to engage, to be purposeful and to be ambitious. Pupils get the right support to be able to access learning and wider opportunities. As a result, they can participate fully in school life. This helps to ensure that

every pupil can flourish, regardless of their starting point or individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work, contribute positively to school life and develop the skills needed for future success.

Lancaster Christ Church pupils love to play. They enjoy spending social time with their friends and peers. This begins in the early years, where children embrace the outdoors. They run, they climb and they connect. As pupils grow and develop, they learn about the importance of eating healthy snacks, work out at the playground gym or challenge themselves on the assault course. Pupils have many opportunities to learn outside the classroom, for example, field trips to study the River Lune and visits to Lancaster Castle. These opportunities support pupils' learning and help to bring the curriculum to life.

Pupils feel safe, supported and understood. They say that bullying is rare and that discrimination and unkind words are not tolerated. If issues arise, pupils know that trusted adults deal with them effectively.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the mathematics curriculum is fully embedded and meets the needs of all pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff in the early years consistently maximise opportunities to promote vocabulary across the learning environment. This will enhance the knowledge that children need to progress into key stage 1.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jane Watson.

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, representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, a local authority representative, a representative of the diocese, staff and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school makes no use of alternative provision.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Blackburn. Its last section 48 inspection was in December 2025.

Headteacher: Emma Simpson

Lead inspector:

Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Amanda Stringer, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Sherwin, 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 9 June 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: 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)

16.58%

Below 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

4.52%

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

15.58%

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 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	66%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
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	86%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

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	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	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	78%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
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	50%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	79%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	71%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘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	50%	68%	-18 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	79%	80%	-1 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	71%	78%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

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

‘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)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	5.9%	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)	9.9%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.8%	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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