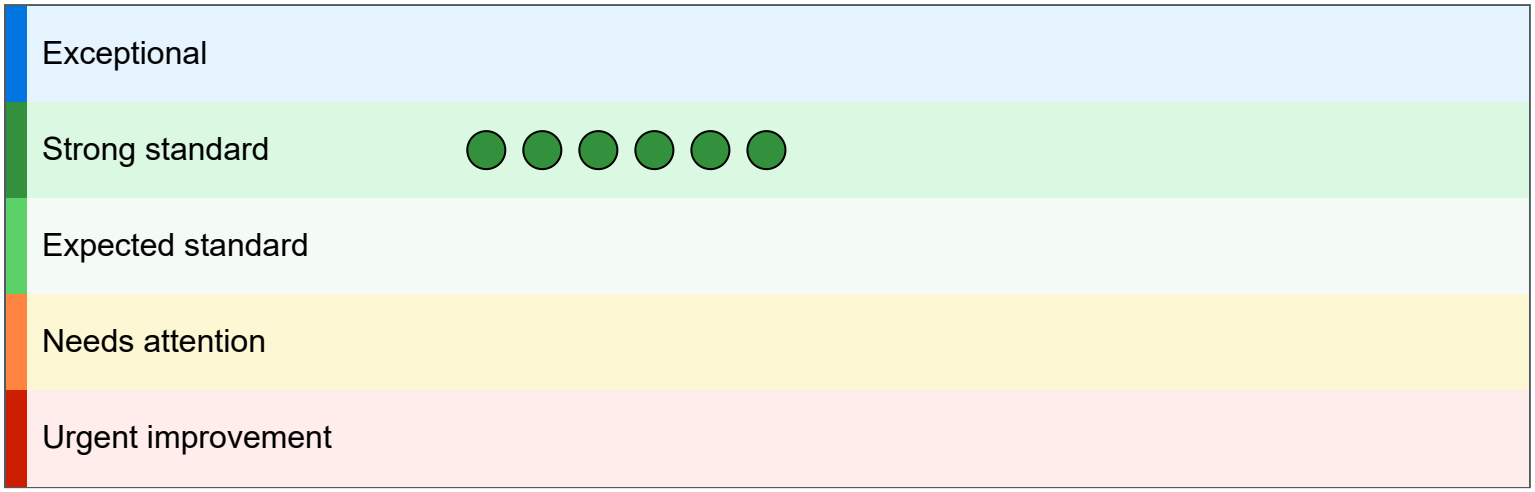
Holy Cross Catholic High School

Address: Myles Standish Way, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 3LS

Unique reference number (URN): 119803

Inspection report: 6 October 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 attain highly. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make positive progress from their starting points. Across lessons, pupils demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Pupils' books show that they build a deep and firm understanding of key concepts over time.

In the most recent published national examination results, pupils' attainment is well above national averages. Comparisons with similar schools are also favourable, with many subject areas attaining well above those in similar schools for 3 consecutive years. Disadvantaged pupils also attain well. In many subjects, but not all, their academic outcomes exceed those of disadvantaged pupils nationally and in similar schools.

Leaders' actions to strengthen reading, writing and mathematics contribute positively to pupils' attainment, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Gains in reading indicate that the support provided is having a positive impact. As a result, pupils, including those who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for their next stages of education, employment and training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders and staff have established a highly positive culture in which pupils value learning, attend regularly and behave with maturity. Leaders maintain an accurate understanding of attendance through rigorous analysis of information. This enables them to identify barriers promptly and provide effective support for pupils who struggle to attend. For example, pupils have access to counselling to reduce anxiety. Attendance, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is above national averages overall. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is close to the national average. However, leaders' actions are securing rapid improvements.

Pupils demonstrate the highest standards of self-discipline and treat others with consistently well-established respect. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are exemplary. Social times are orderly, and pupils move around the school responsibly. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive, creating an environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn. When bullying does occur, pupils know how to report this. They are confident that this will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Where pupils need help to manage their behaviour, leaders put in place strategies. This includes time in the school's inclusion centre to help pupils regulate their emotions independently. As a result of these factors, pupils, including vulnerable groups, attend well, behave positively and thrive within the school community.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have established an ambitious, carefully sequenced curriculum. It enables pupils to build knowledge and skills progressively over time. Through rigorous quality assurance, leaders maintain a robust understanding of curriculum quality. They identify variations

between subjects accurately and take prompt and appropriate action to strengthen provision. Ongoing curriculum development has secured consistently high-quality implementation across subjects, while meaningful links between disciplines help pupils connect and deepen their learning.

Teachers demonstrate expert subject knowledge. They embed clear demonstrations, opportunities for pupils to recall previous learning and skilful questioning consistently into their lessons. Where pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or face other barriers to learning, teachers use well-considered adaptations, including visual supports, technology and tailored resources. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and adapt their teaching promptly. Teachers place a consistent emphasis on reading, vocabulary and spoken communication in lessons. This helps pupils to understand, read and use subject-specific vocabulary confidently. Pupils’ books demonstrate that they build substantial knowledge over time. Feedback helps them refine their work and deepen their understanding.

Highly effective reading support, alongside specialist provision for writing and numeracy, underpins pupils’ positive progress across the curriculum.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Inclusion is embedded consistently well across the school. It is reflected in leaders’ detailed understanding of vulnerable pupils and the barriers they face. Leaders identify barriers to learning and wellbeing promptly. They use accurate transition information, assessment information, referrals and discussions with pupils to pinpoint needs. Regular review meetings ensure that the attendance, behaviour and emerging barriers facing pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are considered collectively. This enables leaders to respond effectively and adapt support skilfully when circumstances change.

Leaders maintain high expectations for vulnerable pupils, including those known to children’s services. They ensure that pupils receive the support required to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that staff have the information and professional learning opportunities required to adapt their teaching effectively. As a result of these factors, support for pupils with obstacles to learning is embedded consistently well across lessons.

Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to provide, for example, specialist reading support and access to emotional literacy support. The impact of reading support is highly effective. The Routledge Centre provides a valued, inclusive space where pupils who face other obstacles to learning can regulate independently. This strengthens their sense of belonging.

Leaders use alternative provision thoughtfully and ensure that placements are in pupils’ best interests.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leadership and governance are highly effective. Leaders and governors share a clear vision centred on inclusion, aspiration and continuous improvement. They maintain a rigorous approach to school improvement through systematic self-evaluation, regular review activities and close monitoring of pupils' attainment, attendance, personal development and wellbeing. Published research has guided curriculum redesign and improvements to provision, ensuring that developments are closely aligned to identified priorities.

Governors provide effective support and challenge. Through half-termly reviews, external scrutiny and monitoring of school priorities, they maintain an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. This includes the impact of additional funding and improvement strategies. Leaders and governors use feedback from the school community, destination information and performance evidence to inform strategic decision-making and refinement. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities diligently.

Leaders are committed to staff wellbeing and reducing workload. By streamlining data collection, adapting meeting schedules and responding to staff feedback, they enable staff to focus on delivering a high-quality education. Staff feel valued, respected and well supported.

A highly positive professional culture is evident. Staff access extensive training through nationally recognised qualifications, external networks and whole-school development programmes. This work has increased consistency in classroom practice and strengthened staff subject knowledge and awareness of school priorities.

Leaders engage purposefully with parents, carers and the wider community through newsletters, workshops and information events. Effective partnerships help address barriers that some pupils face. They also support other schools and welcome external challenges, including curriculum reviews. These actions contribute to ongoing improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have established an extensive and carefully planned personal development programme. It reflects the school's faith values and contributes positively to pupils' knowledge, confidence and wellbeing. Through assemblies, the curriculum and wider experiences, pupils develop a secure understanding of community, diversity and respect. Pupils have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and individual liberty. In lessons, pupils take part in activities that bring these concepts to life, such as mock criminal trials. This strengthens pupils' understanding of the justice system. Pupils recognise the risks associated with harmful online content and coercive relationships. These factors prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that every pupil benefits from a broad range of learning and personal development experiences. They monitor participation carefully. For example, leaders subsidise visits and purchase equipment and specialist clothing for pupils where cost may be a barrier to participation. Pupils benefit from a rich range of sporting, musical and cultural experiences. These include drama performances, which develop pupils' creative strengths, and visits to Madrid and Krakow, which enable pupils to experience different cultures and

learn about their history. Leaders have also established an aspirational scholars' programme. This supports pupils to broaden their horizons and access places in highly regarded colleges nationally.

Pupils benefit from leadership roles that enable them to demonstrate their abilities. For example, pupils apply to become members of the leadership academy, serve as sports leaders and undertake responsibilities such as prefect roles. These roles develop pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility while contributing positively to the school and wider community.

Careers education prepares pupils well for future education, employment and training. Pupils receive guidance that reflects their circumstances and aspirations and helps them understand the pathways available to them. Partnerships with universities, employers and highly regarded independent schools broaden pupils' horizons and encourage ambitious future plans.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Leaders and staff know their pupils and their family circumstances well. Their actions ensure that pupils have equal access to both the curriculum and the wider experiences that the school provides.

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

Pupils demonstrate a thirst for knowledge and are determined to do their best. This is reflected in the quality of work seen in their books. Over time, they build on prior learning to develop a rich understanding of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other challenges in their lives are very well supported. As a result, they make positive progress from their starting points. Pupils, including those with SEND and those who face other barriers to learning, attain above their peers nationally in examinations. They attend school regularly. As a result of these factors, they are very well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils relish the wide range of opportunities that leaders provide to develop their talents and interests beyond the academic curriculum. They carry out responsibilities within the school community with pride. For example, pupils act as prefects and develop valuable leadership skills. Pupils seize opportunities to participate in the wide range of clubs available to them, such as the British Sign Language choir, which enhances their confidence and communication skills, and the eco club, which helps them develop as active citizens. These opportunities help pupils grow in confidence, develop socially and broaden their interests. Pupils value these opportunities highly.

Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and highly supportive. They reflect the school's faith values. Pupils treat one another with consistently well-established respect and demonstrate that they can manage their behaviour independently and with maturity. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils. Pupils feel well supported by staff and are confident that any concerns, including bullying, will be dealt with promptly and effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe and thrive within the school's caring community.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their strategies to continue raising attendance and attainment for disadvantaged pupils, so that their attendance is in line with their non-disadvantaged peers and a greater proportion attain more highly than disadvantaged pupils in similar schools.
- Leaders should sustain the effectiveness of their work to further refine the quality of teaching across all subject areas and phases to continue to enhance the impact that this has on pupils' learning and share their practice externally to support system-wide improvement, including with local and national networks.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Hilary Lunn.

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

This inspection took place on 6 and 7 October 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 HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, governors, representatives of the archdiocese, representatives of the local authority and the headteacher of the virtual school during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection was 3 February 2026.

The school currently makes use of 4 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Gregory Lindley

Lead inspector:
Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Gil Bourgade, Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Sexton, Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean, Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wright, 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 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

976
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: 1,063

School capacity

975
Close to 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.70%
Well 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: 30.4%

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

3.07%
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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.83%
Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	66.7%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	65.8%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	62.7%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	55.0	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	56.9	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	52.3	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.75	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.34	-0.03	Above
2021/22 (final)	0.52	-0.03	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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.9%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	32.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.3%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	42.8	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	41.3	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	40.4	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.07	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.21	-0.57	Above
2021/22 (final)	-0.14	-0.55	Above

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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.9%	53.1%	-15.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	32.0%	53.1%	-21.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	33.3%	52.4%	-19.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	42.8	50.4	-7.6

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	41.3	50.0	-8.7
2022/23 (final)	40.4	50.3	-9.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.07	0.16	-0.09
2022/23 (final)	-0.21	0.17	-0.37
2021/22 (final)	-0.14	0.15	-0.29

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	90%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	98%	94%	Above

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
2025/26 (1 term)	6.5%	7.8%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	7.0%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.0%	8.9%	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
2025/26 (1 term)	17.4%	21.5%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	17.0%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	18.9%	25.6%	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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright