

Skerton St Luke's Church of England Primary School

Address: Slyne Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 2JH

Unique reference number (URN): 119534

Inspection report: 16 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Children experience a calm and welcoming start to school. Staff know children well and build caring relationships that help them feel safe and ready to learn. Routines are clear and consistent, which supports children's confidence and independence.

The curriculum is well sequenced and covers all areas of learning. Staff think carefully about what children need to learn next. They use assessment information well to check what children can do and adapt activities so that learning builds over time. Learning areas are thoughtfully organised. These activities give children purposeful chances to practise early reading, number, language and physical skills throughout the day.

Adults use high-quality interactions to extend children's vocabulary and thinking. They model language and encourage children to talk, explore and share ideas. Early reading is a positive feature. Staff deliver phonics sessions consistently well. Children have regular opportunities to blend sounds, read and write simple words and enjoy stories.

Staff support children with additional needs well. They respond quickly to any barriers and help children stay focused and involved in learning. Small group sessions give extra help where needed. Staff carry out welfare routines with care and sensitivity. As a result of the support they receive, most children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff know pupils well and understand the barriers that may affect their learning or wellbeing. They identify pupils' needs early and work with families and specialists to agree the right support. This reflects the collaborative ethos across the school community to support every pupil. Staff check how well pupils are doing and adjust help when pupils' needs change. Support staff work to ensure pupils can stay focused and learn alongside their classmates. Leaders are improving the use of adjustments to aid learning. Teachers use word banks and plan opportunities for pupils to discuss their thinking more consistently across the school.

Pupils who need extra help benefit from small group or individual sessions. Leaders check understanding closely to know who would benefit from this additional support. 'The Swannery' provides a calm space, where pupils can manage their emotions before returning to learning. Staff receive training that builds their understanding of pupils with social, emotional and communication needs.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully. This helps them to remove barriers linked to wellbeing and learning. Pastoral staff work closely with families to offer guidance and signpost help. This aids pupils, who face challenges linked to wellbeing or home circumstances. Pupils known to social care receive sensitive and timely support.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders show energy and determination in their work. Their ambition for the school is clear. They know the school well and have identified the right areas to focus on. Leaders are taking clear and purposeful steps to strengthen these areas. Recent work to improve writing and spelling is beginning to make a difference. Leaders check how well plans are working by visiting lessons, talking with staff and looking at pupils' work. They also work with local schools and partners to bring in new ideas and refine their approach.

Staff speak positively about the culture leaders are building. They say leaders are visible, approachable and considerate of workload and wellbeing. Staff value the training they receive. This includes opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and work with other schools. Parents and carers share positive views about the school's direction. Leaders are committed to support pupils who need extra help. They put support in place quickly and respond to what each pupil needs.

Governors understand the school's values and priorities. They visit the school regularly to help understand the actions of leaders. Training helps governors understand information about pupils' progress, safeguarding and curriculum developments. Governors support and challenge leaders to make improvements to the school. They are developing their understanding of how well disadvantaged pupils are attaining so they can strengthen their oversight. Governors are active in the school community and maintain positive links with families and local groups. They work closely with leaders to ensure decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders make pupils' personal development a priority. They have set out a clear programme that builds on what pupils already know and helps them remember important messages. Pupils talk confidently about healthy relationships, puberty and how to manage risks online. Visitors such as the police and school nurse help pupils learn how to stay safe in real-life situations, including on the roads and near water. Pupils understand how to look after their physical and mental health. This includes how to manage their emotions. Staff adjust lessons sensitively for pupils with additional needs so that everyone can take part and understand the learning.

Pupils learn about diversity, justice and respect. They know that everyone should be treated kindly and that discrimination is not acceptable. Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values through assemblies and special events. Pupils enjoy learning about the different cultures and beliefs of their classmates. Their work on understanding difference and tolerance led to a published poetry book that celebrates their mature views.

The school offers a wide range of clubs, trips and activities that help pupils develop their interests and talents. These span sports, music, drama and outdoor learning. Pupils build self-confidence through events, such as drama performances, dance and choral competitions and music clubs. Careers events help pupils build ambition and consider their future aspirations. Leaders complete checks to ensure that all pupils can take part.

Pastoral support is a well-developed feature of the school. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly, when pupils need help. Pupils know who to talk to if they are worried or need to share concerns. Pupils take pride in leadership roles. Roles include becoming Year 6 buddies, Pupil Parliament members and Eco-Green Guardians. These responsibilities help pupils feel part of the school community and prepare them well for their next steps.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Recently pupils have not achieved well. Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment has recently fallen below similar pupils nationally in most areas. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they could be.

Across the school, pupils' skills in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and number formation are not consistently secure. Some inaccuracies persist and limit how well pupils build new learning. However, there are signs of improvement. Pupils' work shows clearer progress in key areas of writing and spelling. Younger pupils benefit from support with early reading and communication. Phonics outcomes have been above national outcomes in recent years. Many pupils can talk about recent learning across the curriculum and recall key ideas. Leaders' actions to refine the curriculum and teaching are beginning to raise pupils' achievement.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Despite leaders' actions, overall attendance is below national figures and has not improved. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils also remains below national levels, and attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has fallen further. Too many pupils are persistently absent, including vulnerable pupils. This means many pupils miss important learning. Leaders have introduced a range of attendance strategies. These include allowing pupils to start their school day in calming spaces, such as 'The Swannery'. Pupils also earn stars for regular attendance. These approaches help some pupils who find school routines difficult attend more regularly. However, they have not improved attendance for the wider school. Leaders' current analysis of attendance information is not sharp enough to support improvements in pupils' attendance.

Behaviour in lessons and around school is calm and respectful. Pupils understand the school's new expectations and follow routines well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. This helps pupils feel safe and ready to learn. Staff apply school rules consistently and fairly when dealing with behaviour issues. Bullying or unkind behaviour is resolved swiftly by staff. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Those with additional needs benefit from well-planned support. This helps them manage their emotions and stay involved in lessons.

There are inconsistencies in how well teachers help pupils secure the important foundations. In some books, errors in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and number formation remain over time.

The curriculum is generally built logically and sets out clearly what pupils should learn over time. Leaders' recent work to improve writing and spelling is beginning to make a difference in some classes. Phonics is taught with consistency to support early reading and spelling.

Leaders monitor pupil progress closely and identify those who need extra help. Additional staff support pupils well, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They break tasks into manageable steps to help pupils stay focused. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about and share their ideas. This is helping pupils to write with more confidence.

Teachers are starting to use training to consider the best questions to ask. They revisit tasks to check what pupils understand before moving on. These routines are helping teachers spot where pupils need more practice, but they are not yet used consistently across the school. Leaders' monitoring is helping staff use these approaches with increasing confidence.

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

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Skerton St Luke's. They describe the school as a caring place, where adults listen and help when worries arise. Warm relationships between pupils and staff help pupils feel known and valued. The school's 'Take Care' rules shape how pupils treat one another and is reflected in how they speak and behave. Pupils understand the importance of kindness and respect. Pupils benefit from a supportive team of staff, who know them well. They are encouraged to grow in confidence and to live out the school's values in their daily interactions. Pupils talk about 'taking care' of themselves and others, and this shared language helps them feel part of a community that looks after one another.

Pupils behave well around school. They follow routines, play cooperatively and show consideration for others. When friendship issues or bullying occur, pupils are confident that staff will act quickly and fairly. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online, on the roads and near water. They talk confidently about personal safety, healthy lifestyles and managing their feelings. Pupils share concerns with trusted adults and know they will try to help them.

Pupils enjoy learning. They talk positively about the subjects they study. Yet some pupils find learning harder because they have gaps in spelling, writing and punctuation. This means they do not achieve as well as they could. Older pupils share the importance of regular attendance and how this helps them achieve their best. However, some pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. This means that they miss important learning. Some pupils face barriers to learning. Pupils with additional needs who visit 'The Swannery' know that adults will help them when things are difficult.

Pupils feel a secure sense of belonging. They take part in a wide range of clubs, visits and community events. Leadership roles, such as play leaders and buddies, help pupils develop confidence, responsibility and care for younger pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen teaching so that improvements in pupils' achievement, including disadvantaged pupils, are reflected in pupils' outcomes.
 - Leaders should support staff to identify and address pupil's gaps in foundational knowledge.
 - Leaders should strengthen attendance procedures so that attendance improves, persistent absence reduces and pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not miss essential learning time.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors for this school is Judith Gault.

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 senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the local governing body, as well as representatives from the local authority and Diocese of Blackburn.

Inspectors spoke with several pupils, staff, parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Blackburn. Its last section 48 inspection was June 2023.

The school currently does not use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Leanne Gaffiney

Lead inspector:

Andy Beattie, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Sherwin, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Marlow, 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 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

198

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)

41.41%

Above 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

2.02%

Below 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

8.59%

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	58%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	40%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	63%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	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	66%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	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	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	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	67%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

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	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	37%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	44%	Above

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	57%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	47%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	60%	Close to average

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	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average
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	51%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	47%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average

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	47%	68%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	37%	69%	-32 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	67%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	66%	-6 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	57%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	60%	80%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	78%	-12 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	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	78%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	78%	-24 pp
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	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	47%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	79%	-33 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp

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)	6.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	5.9%	Above

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)	14.4%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	18.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.3%	16.2%	Above

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.

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