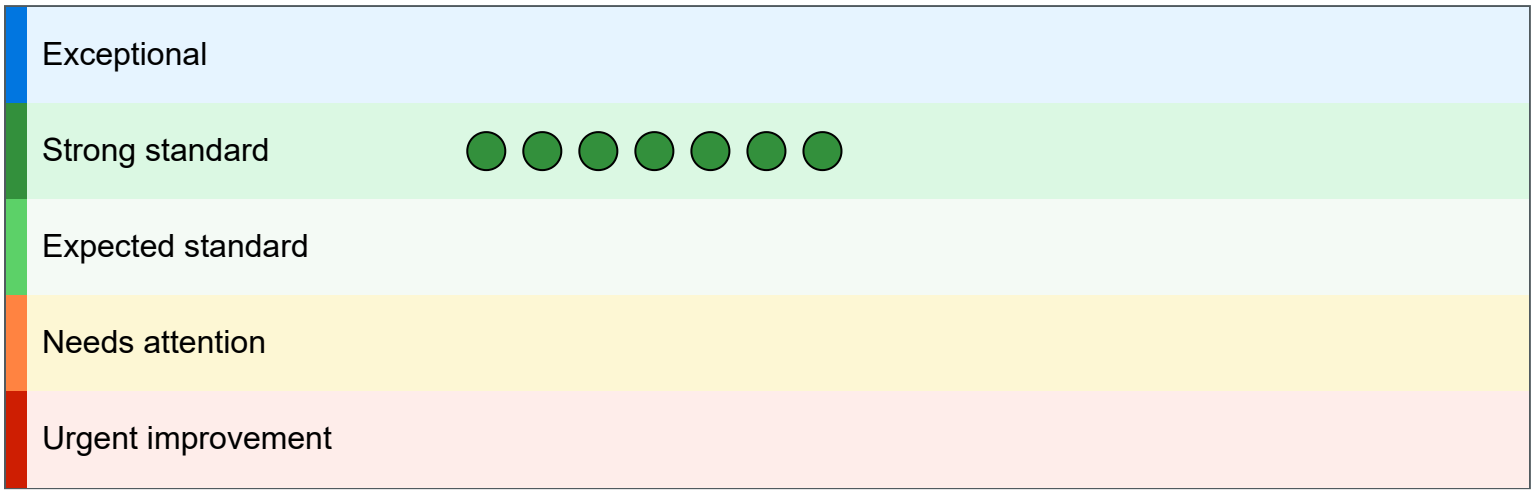
Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Address: Groundwell Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 2LU

Unique reference number (URN): 137074

Inspection report: 29 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 over time. They attain above average results compared to their peers nationally. Those who are disadvantaged achieve better than their non-disadvantaged peers. Leaders ensure that all pupils, regardless of their needs or when they joined the school, achieve well.

Leaders prioritise securing pupils' knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This focus enables pupils to develop the essential skills that they need to learn confidently across the school's broad curriculum. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, build secure subject knowledge from their individual starting points. As they move through the school, pupils deepen their understanding of increasingly complex ideas and concepts. Staff are consistently ambitious, and pupils produce work of a high standard across the curriculum. This supports them to be very well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

The school places a strong emphasis on securing pupils' regular attendance. Very high expectations and well-established procedures underpin this work. Leaders and staff work closely and compassionately with pupils and their families. Their deep oversight has led to pupils attending school very well over time. There are very low levels of persistent absence. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those facing other barriers.

Leaders have incredibly high expectations of all pupils. There are clear rules and routines that pupils understand and follow diligently. This is built on warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils behave very positively. In lessons this means all pupils can learn effectively and disruption is rare. Arriving and leaving school is calm and orderly. Playtimes are well organised and supervised effectively. Pupils manage themselves extremely well, cooperating and treating each other with respect and kindness. Those who may struggle with their conduct are supported deftly, including by the school's pastoral offer, to manage their emotions. This helps to ensure that pupils' needs are met and the support has a lasting impact. Bullying is exceptionally rare, and pupils are confident that if it does happen, adults will deal with their concerns quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have secured a very ambitious, carefully sequenced and highly effective curriculum. This is delivered with skill and precision. Careful checks and adaptions help the curriculum adjust to meet the changing needs of the overall cohort of pupils. For example, leaders have changed and refined the curriculum skilfully. There is high importance placed on pupils securing the basics of communication and language, including phonics, in the early years. This progresses to reading and spelling to ensure that all pupils can learn the wider curriculum very successfully. Pupils make quick progress from their starting points and those who have gaps in their knowledge close them quickly. This includes pupils and

children who have little or no English, have recently joined the school, or have other barriers to learning.

The training that staff receive means they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high-quality curriculum in all subjects and key stages. Teachers' checks ensure that pupils' starting points are known precisely. The curriculum is sequenced carefully to build on what pupils already know. Any changes that are needed to support pupils to learn intended knowledge are made skilfully. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning without reducing pupils' independence. Classroom routines promote high levels of commitment to learning.

Early years

Strong standard

Leaders and staff are highly knowledgeable about early years education and rightly prioritise it as the foundation of the children's future development. Staff have created a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment where children learn and follow routines very happily and with independence.

Leaders are highly ambitious for what the children can achieve regardless of their starting points. The curriculum is designed precisely with knowledge of the pupils at its heart. Staff carefully check what individual children know and can do and adapt future learning to make sure they make rapid progress.

Children engage in a range of well-designed activities to support development across the 7 areas of learning and development. For example, constructing an obstacle course collaboratively and taking turns to use it. Adults interact with children frequently throughout the day, engaging children in their activities using symbols and signing to aid understanding for those who need it. Staff use ambitious words and phrases to ensure that children develop the language they need for future learning in key stage 1. This includes ensuring that children secure the necessary knowledge of phonics and can communicate effectively. As a result, children build strong foundations for future learning and achieve well, with most children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception. Children across the early years, including children with SEND or who may have other barriers to learning, are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and determinedly promote inclusion across school life. Leaders quickly identify any barriers to learning, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak little or no English. Through their understanding, and in collaboration with parents and other agencies, leaders remove those barriers very effectively. They check carefully that these actions are supporting pupils to learn and remember more, including providing targeted amendments to how the curriculum is delivered. Regular and robust checks help leaders make changes rapidly when necessary. As a result, pupils progress very well from their starting points. Staff receive high-quality training that means they can support pupils with SEND or other pupils with barriers to their learning, including those known or previously known to social care. Those with barriers to their wellbeing are also very well supported, for example, by pastoral staff.

Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are supported by staff to participate successfully alongside their peers so that they benefit fully from wider experiences and opportunities provided by the school. This is because the programme of experiences has been designed carefully to ensure that they are accessible to all pupils. Leaders use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils highly effectively. As a result, pupils thrive academically and socially at Holy Rood Roman Catholic Primary School.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders and trustees understand the school thoroughly and have a clearly defined vision to provide an inclusive, highly effective education for the pupils in their community. They have a deep understanding of their pupils and families and are highly responsive to changes over time. They evaluate the school's strengths and areas that need improvement accurately. Leaders anticipate issues and take very effective action to address any areas that fall below their high expectations. Leaders have built effective collaborations with other professionals to assure themselves of the quality of the school's work and to support their own development. School leaders also share their good practice with other educational settings.

Staff understand their role in supporting the school's priorities. To enable them to do this, they receive high-quality, evidence-based training that is carefully matched to the needs of pupils, as well as their individual requirements. This includes those at the start of their career. Leaders ensure that staff's wellbeing is considered and that workload is manageable. Staff feel valued and describe it as like being part of a school family.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have established highly effective partnerships with parents. Leaders continually refine their approaches to engage parents so that they feel included and valued. Parents know that the decisions leaders make are firmly rooted in the best interests of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, English as an additional language, or any other barriers to their learning or wellbeing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders have carefully planned a comprehensive personal development programme. Pupils have a deep understanding of British values. They articulate examples of what these values, such as tolerance and respect, mean to them. Pupils demonstrate them in the way they behave towards each other. They hold a sophisticated understanding of healthy relationships and different types of families.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their character, which they utilise vehemently. There are many leadership opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and take on greater responsibility. Pupil librarians encourage others to read enthusiastically and widely. Wellbeing ambassadors support other pupils to form friendships and look after each other. Digital champions support staff to help pupils remain safe online. School council members are elected, demonstrating to pupils the importance of democracy and representing the interests of others.

Leaders have designed the 'Holy Rood 42', a set of wider curriculum opportunities from early years to Year 6, to significantly broaden pupils' experiences. These include raising

money for charitable organisations, learning survival skills, meeting a member of Parliament and being able to give first aid. Clubs allow pupils to develop their talents and interests, such as in gardening, wellbeing, yoga, and arts and crafts. There are trips that bring the curriculum to life, such as visits to the source of the Thames for geography, a Stone Age village for history, and the theatre for performing arts. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers, are enriched by these experiences.

The school's values and ethos are woven through the highly effective pastoral support pupils need. They know that there are trusted adults that they can share any concerns with, and they are confident they will get support. This leads pupils to feel safe, cared for, and valued as individuals.

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

Pupils flourish at Holy Rood Roman Catholic Primary School. They relish coming to school because they enjoy their learning. The curriculum is precisely designed to meet their needs and is delivered highly effectively. Staff adapt pupils' learning and provide targeted help when needed. As a result, pupils build a sense of success. They achieve very well compared to other pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other barriers to their learning or wellbeing progress rapidly from their starting points.

Pupils are keen to be involved in a range of experiences on offer. The 'Holy Rood 42' is a carefully designed set of enriching experiences that pupils are entitled to from early years to Year 6. These range from learning about money, up-cycling clothes and making healthy snacks. There are also trips to local farms, to see a pantomime, to a wildlife park and to an activity centre to try different water sports. Pupils describe what they learned during these experiences with great enthusiasm. Pupils with SEND and other barriers take part fully.

Pupils feel a great sense of belonging to the school. Staff secure warm and respectful relationships with pupils, helping pupils to rightly feel cared for and safe. Staff take time to get to know pupils' interests and qualities. Pupils treat each other with care and respect. They are keen to help others, for example, by making friends or helping with a task. There is very little bullying, and pupils are confident that staff will deal with it effectively if it does happen. They also have trusted adults in school where they can go for assistance with any worries or concerns. Pupils attend very well because they are welcomed, enjoy their learning and get any support they need.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine and adapt the curriculum so that the changing needs of pupils joining the school are met swiftly.

- Leaders should continue to strengthen their work to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils attain the higher standard in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

About this inspection

The school is part of a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phil Gilvin.

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 school leaders, teachers, pupils and trustees during the inspection.

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Headteacher: Naomi Fry

Lead inspector:
Sarah Wilson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Paul Smith, Ofsted Inspector
Lois Smith, 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 29 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

381
Above 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

420
Above 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)

14.70%
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

2.62%
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

13.65%
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

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	80%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	61%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	74%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	73%	Above

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	46%	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	R	R	R

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	62%	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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	58%	Above

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	100%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	100%	59%	Above

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	69%	18 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	67%	33 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	88%	81%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	80%	20 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	88%	78%	9 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	78%	22 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	R	R	R
2025/26 (provisional)	R	R	R
2024/25 (final)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	100%	79%	21 pp

The Key Stage 2 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. ‘R’ in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

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)	3.5%	5.1%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	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)	9.7%	14.4%	Below
2024/25 (3 term)	5.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.1%	14.6%	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.

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