

Samlesbury Church of England School

Address: Potters Lane, Samlesbury, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 0UE

Unique reference number (URN): 119572

Inspection report: 19 May 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

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Samlesbury's learning experience is hard to resist. Typically, pupils want to be in school on time, every day. Leaders have created a culture where pupils, staff and families view attendance as their collective responsibility. The school communicates clear expectations that pupils should attend whenever possible and ensures that parents and carers understand them. Leaders check attendance closely, celebrate those who attend consistently and act quickly when attendance declines. This effective approach ensures that pupils attend school regularly and are ready to learn. This includes pupils from vulnerable groups. Equally, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very low. Building positive relationships with pupils and families underpins this work.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is commendable. There is a highly positive culture of 'this is how we do it here'. Pupils value their right to learn. As a result, there are few disruptions to lessons. This means pupils benefit from a calm, orderly learning environment. Leaders set and uphold high expectations for pupils' conduct. Skilful staff model these expectations effectively. Pupils are taught to understand their feelings and behaviours. This enables them to understand and manage their own behaviours with greater independence as they progress through the school. Bullying and unkind behaviour are rare. Discriminatory language or behaviour is challenged directly. Pupils are assured that staff deal swiftly and effectively with any issues or concerns they might have.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of the school's work. Well-established systems ensure that staff already know children by the time they start in the Reception year. This means that staff are able to organise effective support and meet individual needs quickly and accurately. This robust approach continues as pupils move through the school. Leaders review learning regularly and hold progress meetings with staff. These discussions enable staff to reflect on what is working well and where further adjustments are needed. When necessary, leaders put detailed plans in place so that pupils receive the right help at the right time. Skilled leaders provide regular training so that all staff understand how to support pupils with additional needs effectively. As a result, staff confidently use practical strategies, clear language support and targeted support to ensure that pupils keep up with learning.

Leaders use additional funding effectively. Pupils facing barriers to learning receive additional support, in order to help them make effective and sustained progress. This includes breakfast provision, access to clubs and personalised support during lessons. These adjustments help pupils be ready to learn. Staff working with pupils demonstrate high levels of skill and care to ensure that support is positive and productive for these pupils. This level of reassurance encourages pupils to want to attend regularly and participate fully in school life. Leaders make sure that they appropriately support any pupils known (or previously known) to social care.

Leaders have designed a rich and well-thought-out programme that helps pupils grow into confident, thoughtful and responsible young people. It is designed to be relevant to pupils' school life and to prepare them for their future lives in modern Britain. The impact of the programme is evident in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Children in the early years quickly learn to share, take turns and become independent. Older pupils are respectful and collaborative.

Pupils of all ages gain a sense of responsibility and belonging through the leadership opportunities that exist across the school, for example serving as house captains or as elected members of the dynamic school council. Pupils are proud to have this level of trust put in them by their teachers and their classmates. This is evident in the long-established lunchtime routines where pupils dine happily in mixed-aged groups. The youngest children learn from their older peers. This breaks down barriers, and pupils forge meaningful connections across their school community.

Leaders broaden pupils' experiences through well-planned trips. For example, pupils travel by train to visit London and meet their MP at the Houses of Parliament. This deepens their understanding of democracy beyond school voting experiences. Visits to different places of worship, such as Hindu temples and mosques, allow pupils to compare faiths and practices. Pupils are well equipped to reflect on important messages about fundamental British values. Pupils get the knowledge and skills that they need to develop a genuine level of respect, tolerance and appreciation for difference. They know this is essential to be a well-rounded citizen of the world.

Pupils develop a secure understanding of healthy relationships and the changes that will happen as they grow older. They talk confidently about their physical and mental health and know what to do if they need support. They learn to stay safe online and navigate the internet with vigilance. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well equipped with the attitudes and attributes they need to thrive at secondary school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that pupils achieve well across subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically attain well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in the school's published test results. Consequently, most pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils enjoy learning. In subjects such as geography and history, pupils remember key knowledge, and they are able to recall what they have learned. Pupils have many opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, for example biographical writing in history and graphs and tallies in science.

Pupils take pride in their learning. Their written work is clear and their ideas are well organised. Pupils typically use correct spelling. Children in the early years hold their pencils well. They are keen to write and do so confidently across the provision. As pupils move through the school, they diligently practise their handwriting. They show determination to master skills. As a result, they learn to form letters accurately. This means that they develop the fluency needed to write longer pieces at pace.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught. This insight has informed their ambition to strengthen key aspects. For example, they have recently introduced a new approach to deepening learning in mathematics and teaching grammar. Leaders have now designed a suitably broad and logical curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum reflects the school's context. In response to the changing needs of children, particularly those in the early years, leaders have refined and adapted the curriculum offer. For example, they have recently reshaped the early curriculum and their approach to the teaching of phonics.

Across subjects, leaders have embedded effective strategies for teaching mixed-age classes. Knowledgeable staff are adept at explaining and modelling concepts. Staff have secure subject knowledge, and tasks are well designed to build pupils' learning. This includes the teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff use effective strategies to check on pupils' understanding. They provide timely support or guidance to address any misconceptions.

Leaders have a deep understanding of pupils' individual needs, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to make appropriate adaptations and reasonable adjustments for pupils who need them. This enables pupils with barriers to learning to succeed.

Early years

Expected standard 

Although it is not yet fully embedded, the recently updated early years curriculum is well designed and ambitious. It highlights the importance of communication skills. Leaders have accurately identified early reading as a focus. They are taking appropriate steps to implement a more precise approach to the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1.

Across provision, staff prioritise children's language development through everyday conversations and targeted support. They interact warmly and purposefully with children to extend their vocabulary and thinking skills. The outdoor environment is an exciting space where physical development, language and exploration are promoted. Children get along well with each other, learning to share and take turns. Children play imaginatively. They collaborate and they thrive.

Early writing is well considered. Children get a wide range of opportunities to practise forming letters correctly. Children grasp early number skills well and develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. Leaders make regular checks on children's progress so that they can address any gaps that they identify.

During their time in early years, children make steady progress across the areas of learning. Calm routines, quiet spaces and sensitive support help children to feel safe. Children's behaviour is one of the most positive features of the early years. Children develop into confident individuals who sustain interest in tasks and are eager to talk about their experiences.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for the school. They have a detailed understanding of the school and its context. They understand the school's strengths and what they need to do, in order to improve. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests. Leaders focus on removing barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Leaders proactively share their expertise to develop other teachers' skills. Leaders model effective teaching. They support staff's growth through mentoring and coaching. Leaders ensure that staff have appropriate professional development to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Leaders ensure that they consider staff's workload and wellbeing. Consequently, staff feel valued and listened to. They are extremely proud to work at the school.

Leaders have prioritised safeguarding and ensured that staff have the necessary training to keep children safe.

Governors use their knowledge and experience to support leaders well. They understand the school's priorities and successfully hold leaders to account through effective challenge. Governors want every child to feel valued and included. They work with leaders to ensure that the school is a safe and nurturing place. They visit the school regularly and take the time to understand its work in depth. Governors ensure that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They maintain clear oversight of how well pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, are supported to achieve well. Leaders have established positive relationships with the community. Everyone works together to support pupils. This helps pupils attend well, thrive and flourish.

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

Pupils thrive in this warm, nurturing and inclusive environment. The school's small size helps create a strong sense of belonging and community. Pupils describe the school as 'like a family'. They are safe, valued and listened to. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and respectful.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite, kind and supportive of one another, reflecting the school's Christian values and ethos of 'Let your light shine'. Pupils understand the importance of helping others. They take pride in contributing to school life through genuine leadership responsibilities, charity work and wider opportunities. These opportunities help pupils to develop life skills, confidence and independence. From the early years onwards, pupils enjoy learning because teachers design engaging activities that

capture their interest. The curriculum is broad and enriched through trips, visitors and memorable experiences. These help pupils develop confidence and curiosity about the wider world.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Staff encourage pupils to work hard and to be resilient. Pupils, including those with additional needs, are well supported to succeed academically and socially. Personal development is deeply embedded across the school. Pupils grow into thoughtful, responsible and confident young people.

Older pupils are effective role models to the younger children. They support them in positive interactions at social times. Breaktimes are valued and action-packed. Pupils play harmoniously. They encourage each other in character-building activities, such as drama, sports, climbing adventures and imaginative play. Incidents of bullying or discrimination are incredibly rare. Pupils know there are trusted adults they can speak to if they are worried. Pupils feel safe in a calm, secure and supportive school. Staff and governors make this their priority. They ensure that the school is a calm, secure and supportive place to learn and flourish. Parents and carers appreciate the support that the school provides. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to evaluate the curriculum carefully, using analysis of the school's evolving context to inform necessary changes that shape and deepen pupils' learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that the recently updated early years curriculum, including the teaching of phonics, is taught consistently well across all classes.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Phil Baines.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the co-headteachers, representatives of the governing body, local authority, diocese, staff and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no 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.

At the time of the inspection, there were 64 pupils on roll.

Co-headteachers: Lucy Sutton and Louise Quayle

Lead inspector:

Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Steven Rooney, 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 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

65

Well below 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

70

Well 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)

18.46%

Close to 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

1.54%

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

4.62%

Well below 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	72%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	91%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	75%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	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	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	91%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	80%	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	63%	46%	Above
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	88%	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	63%	59%	Close to average
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	75%	60%	Above
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	63%	68%	-5 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	88%	80%	8 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	63%	78%	-15 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	75%	80%	-5 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)	4.5%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.5%	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)	4.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.0%	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.

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



© Crown copyright